WHAT'S ON THE WORKER'S MIND

Whiting Williams

Labor conditions 1920's

I.P. Rep. ~~1900~~ '83

7.50

Edward R. Pike

1921

WHAT'S ON THE WORKER'S MIND

"ANY CHANCE OF A MAN'S GETTIN' ON 'ROUND HERE TO-DAY?"

The author as an applicant for a job. The package of overalls under his arm announces that he is ready to begin at once

WHAT'S ON THE WORKER'S MIND

BY ONE WHO PUT ON OVERALLS TO FIND OUT

WHITING WILLIAMS

FORMERLY PERSONNEL DIRECTOR OF THE HYDRAULIC PRESSED STEEL COMPANY

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1921

COPYRIGHT, 1920, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

Published September, 1920
Reprinted November, 1920; February, 1921

PREFACE

"Worse than at any time in history"—that seems the only proper way to describe the present relations between the various persons commonly grouped, in these industrial times, as Labor, Management, Capital, and the Public—the investors of brawn, brains, and bullion, and the "bourgeoisie."

For that reason it has seemed, on the whole, desirable to make public in this way records and observations put down at the close of strenuous days and nights, in the belief that the chief causes of the troublesome factors of the situation are as deep as human nature—and no deeper. If, somehow, the experiences described may help to a better understanding of each other's minds and hearts, the effort will be accounted not in vain. Certainly such a better understanding of the fundamental humanness of all the persons connected with the industrial process, whether in one group or another—and most of us are in two or three of those groups at different times—is indispensable to both the preservation and the upbuilding of the life of our nation—and, perhaps, through it, of the world.

Because neither commendation nor criticism of communities or companies is intended or desired, names are not given correctly and geography is purposely obscured.

Some effort has been made to restrain the temptation to draw conclusions from the various experiences and testimonies at the time encountered. At the close of their recital I shall make bold to set forth what seem to me proper interpretations, but not without giving then, as now, my

full blessing to any and all readers who may find themselves arrived at very different conclusions.

The particular reason for trying to get at the whole matter in this particular way arises from the belief that men's actions spring rather from their feelings than from their thoughts, and that people cannot be interviewed for their feelings. The interviewer can only listen, and then try to understand because he is not only hearing but experiencing and sympathizing.

Since the period described jobs have become more plentiful. This does not at all weaken my conviction of the fundamental importance to the worker of the daily job as the axle of his entire world. On the contrary, it serves, I believe, only to complicate the whole industrial problem in certain ways—ways which shall receive attention before the book is ended.

WHITING WILLIAMS.

June, 1920.

CONTENTS

PART I—OVERALLS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Hunting a Job	3
II.	In a Ten-Thousand-Man-Power Steel Plant	11
III.	In a Rolling-Mill	39
IV.	"Steel Still Slow—Miners Wanted"	71
V.	A Second Coal Town	106
VI.	The Circle of the Hiring-Gates	150
VII.	With the Builders of Ships	157
VIII.	In an Oil Refinery	175
IX.	In the Iron-Mines	205
X.	Among the Ingots and Billets Again	238

PART II—FINDINGS

XI.	Some Outstanding Impressions	281
XII.	Some Deeper Factors	293
XIII.	The Way Out—and Management	309
XIV.	The Way Out and the Public	319

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
"Any chance of a man's gettin' on 'round here to-day?"	*Frontispiece*
Charging an open-hearth furnace	24
Pouring the metal into the moulds	34
Some types from the coal and steel towns	62
About to descend into the mine	82
Taking down the first shot	98
Going to the day's work	110
A freight engine lifted by a crane	132
Migratory workers	154
Laying the keel	228
"Where coal and ore meet"	254
The author as a steel worker	264

PART I

OVERALLS

CHAPTER I

HUNTING A JOB

Cleveland, Ohio,
January 30, 1919.

I SUPPOSE the reason why that song, "Hanging Danny Dee-ver in the mor—ning" keeps coming into my mind is that early to-morrow I walk the plank off the good ship "White Collar" into some seven months of what ought to prove interesting and worth-while adventure on the rough seas of "Common Labor."

With fair luck some kind of unskilled job in a steel plant should come along before my twenty-five dollars and the "hocking" possibilities of my grip of old clothes give out. If peace orders fail to take the place of the cancelled war contracts and the present unemployment spreads, I'll hope to pick up enough to eat, at least, in the way of "hand-outs" from the country's kindly housewives.

With job or without, the chief point and purpose of it all must not escape me. It is *not* to learn what feelings my new surroundings will give *me*. This is of no interest, and can easily be discounted, as due to my years of soft-handed college and social work. Instead, and on the contrary, the constant aim must be to use the job and its surroundings to carry me so close to my fellow-workers—or fellow-hoboes, if necessary—that they will tell me about themselves—*their* thoughts and especially their feelings; for these, I am sure, have a lot more to do with the doings of all of us than our thoughts.

Most of our morning's news—Bolshevists in Russia and Germany, rebels in Roumania, rioters in Ireland, strikers in

England and here—means that large groups of people are misbehaving because they feel they're being abused and overlooked or misunderstood. If "men are square," then *something must be on their mind*—hunger, hopelessness, or sense of injustice—or they would behave as reasonably and normally and decently as any of us; they would be just as anxious to count and "get on" and be thought well of by their fellow-citizens.

Maybe they won't let me get close enough to see what's the trouble. But I have a hunch that they will somehow sense that I believe in them and their wish to be square, exactly as I believe in myself and everybody else.

Well, we shall see what we shall see—and it's time to get some sleep before that train begins to whistle—". . . in the mor—ning."

Steelville,
3.00 P. M., Friday,
January 31.

Not much progress yet toward the discovery of Steel, but already some good findings in Humanity. Expected fists, but have found hands!

The railway people were, if anything, a little more friendly for my sheepskin overcoat. The policemen take me in a friendly way by my shoulders and point with a jolly "There ye are, me friend, see it?" The public employment clerks say, "Not a job in the place," as if they were sorry. Up-stairs, there, a lorgnetted woman (a volunteer worker) wanted almost to pour me tea while giving addresses for a rooming-house. Workers assure me concernedly of their belief that getting a job is going to be "the devil, all right," but give all the pointers they can.

One man did yell at me. It was when the employment clerk referred me to him to do some steel chipping out of town.

"You-a no-a cheepah? Vell den—not'ing! No-a cheepah,

no-a go-a!" he shouted, as though I was deaf. But I guess, at that, the information required giving to the whole roomful of about seventy-five laborers of every conceivable nationality and of every degree of respectability—and lack of it.

"Previous experience? Yes, sir, I used to work in a Tube Mill in S——. But I'll take anything."

"Well, there's nothing here to-day."

That's the way it has been nearly all day here in the different employment offices—with the streets full of workless men. To get away from so much competition I walked a long distance out to a plant of the —— Company, practising on the way my new working man's walk—a sort of swinging drawl of a gait. By that time I began to see myself in the bread line which will be forming very soon unless business picks up.

"If you're here to-night at six, or to-morrow morning at seven, perhaps we can use you," somebody in the superintendent's corridor told me; "we're often short when the shift goes on."

So I've taken a dollar room at this hotel because the lorgnetted woman's only other address would probably want a week's rent in advance.

Believe me, I'm going to be on hand at six! And I'll either be weary after ten hours' work to-morrow morning —or a waiter at those gates at seven. Because every hollow-chested derelict you see is a human sign-board which says: "Where I have been there is no work."

And it scares you.

Everybody seems to accept me for what I'm trying to be, though I'm still rather deficient in grammarless lingo. But it is most surprising that everybody is so kindly. I wonder if it means that a pressed coat and a shaved face work to keep a fellow away from the real friendliness of ordinary human beings.

A Public Library,
Steelville,
Feb. 1.

I've kept recalling that "same old cat yet" story of the boy who ran away and, after what seemed to be years of absence, returned that same evening to marvel that the same tabby was still under the home roof. It makes me want to laugh and mourn at the same time to think that I entered this new world only yesterday.

In the absorption of trying to "live a life," as the college presidents call it on Commencement Day, I had forgotten how endless a day could be when all your thought must go merely to trying to earn a living. It has to go slowly, just because every move is so deadly serious. You will either get that job or you won't. If you get it—great joy! Life is then and thereby re-established. If you don't—then more pinching and wandering and worry about the future and bum-land. So you watch all the harder for the arrival of the gang-boss who is to come out—and, maybe, settle your problem.

Last night for an hour I stood at the gate with twenty-five others, negroes and foreigners, peering steadily into that plant while the two policemen looked at us from above their blue-coated stomachs as though we were so many hogs threatening to rush in and eat up the place. Men don't seem to chat or make friends then because each feels the other his competitor—so we all stood shivering, silent, and intent. Whenever we saw any one we thought might be the boss, we all hunched up our shoulders so as to look husky and tried to catch his eye.

The gulf there is between men at such a time! Between those who came proudly out of the gate swinging their dinner-buckets and feeling themselves members of the privileged class of job-holders, and us who looked on in envy. The only bigger gulf I can imagine to-night is be-

tween such as us and the lordly potentate known as the plant policeman. It just took my breath away to see some of them (the job-holders, of course) positively familiar with these policemen!

Finally all of us had to give up, ten minutes or so after the big gate closed, and only three (all negroes) had been taken on. Altogether it was one of the longest and most wearing hours of my life. I walked wearily back through a very deserted street, safe in the knowledge that nobody would think me worth holding up.

By six-forty this morning I again had my eyes glued on that gate—together with almost seventy-five others. After the slowest and almost the most serious half-hour of my life, the labor-boss failed to show up completely. We were a disappointed and blasphemous crowd.

"Look at them hands!" said one muscular fellow. "Ain't they good enough to earn a living for my wife and kids! But I been in every place in this whole district. Ain't that a h—— of a country for a man to live in?"

"It's these —— Democrats," spoke up a boy.

"No, it's those —— Republicans," said another.

After consuming my beer in a near-by saloon as slowly as possible, so as to get the lay of the land, I asked a drunken young Pole how could a fellow get a job around here, anyways. He looked me over carefully.

"If you got education, ask for Mr. B——."

The power of a name! They say that primitive peoples believe you have power over a spirit if you know its name. Sounds reasonable. Anyway it worked. When I asked the policeman for "Mr. B——," I seemed to rise miles in his estimation instantly. Action was immediate. Mr. B—— seemed mystified by me—though I'd rubbed my hands on the floor to make them dirtier before he came out —until I said I'd failed at clerking and selling and wanted to make my hands earn my living now.

"The men latest hired have all been laid off, and must have first chance on," he said in a kindly voice. "Steel is slow just now. War contracts cancelled, no peace orders in. Walk up to the —— blast furnaces."

No job at the furnaces—nor at the rolling-mills farther on. By this time I was thinking too much about bread lines to spend even a nickel of my fast-vanishing pile for beer—and the bar-keep's help—in the saloon where I stopped for a rest.

"I should say not!" shot back a customer with much heat when asked if he knew of a job.

Back in town the employment office told of 3,000 just laid off at one plant, and of other hundreds elsewhere. Such things, aided and abetted by those bums who line the streets and haunt the gates, do rub the terror of joblessness into a fellow's system. I know now just how bitterly one of them felt when there at the common labor desk the clerk told him:

"Say, where was you?—just signed up thirty-seven whites and twenty-seven blacks for the —— Railroad a minute ago."

The man's oaths were not of anger but of the deepest anguish and despair: "Oh, the —— —— luck! I been here six hours, and I had to step out for only two minutes! Oh, my God!"

At the near-free lunch-counter in a crowded saloon I understood the glow of joy in a young fellow who proclaimed himself the "luckiest man on earth" for having found a job that morning which paid him "one dollar and six bits" for a few hours' work. The bar-tender became my friend when I told him of my luck:

"Say, I could 'a' placed you if you'd run in here last night—twenty-two a week and found" (board and room).

"Oh, bar-tendin', of course"—when I asked, "What doin'?"

He seemed much disappointed by my inexperience in that line. But he has a friend, so he told me an hour ago, and if I'll drop in Monday ——

Meanwhile he begs me, if my purse is limited, to "go mighty careful with every penny you got."

"You see we fellers get to know the signs. I been panhandled for more free drinks or bowls of soup in the last three weeks than in the whole year before. You take it from me we're to have an awful hard winter."

I'm guessing he's right. This afternoon, after spending a good dollar to go to a big plant outside of town, I found the same hopeless situation. A week or so more of this and I'll have to sew up my last five dollars and try for a dishwasher's job to keep me until the sales-managers can tell a happier tale than yesterday, when one was quoted as having "the first week in our entire history without one single steel order!" I'm watching my money hard. Going without even a dollar watch. What has tried me most sorely these cold days has been the loss of one of my thick mittens. To-morrow I must find a cheaper room. Yesterday I saw some hoboes warming their hands around a fire by the railroad. I certainly hope I won't have to join their open-air club.

Getting on with my grammar. "Ain't there no job around here now'ures?" comes now with fair ease, also some mild but passable profanity if I make a good run and jump for it. But the biggest thing in the world to me just now is a job—preferably in a steel-mill.

The next biggest things of the day are the hopelessness, the foreboding disastrousness of joblessness, with its threatened entrance into the evil-smelling army of hoboes; the endlessness of the jobless day of constant trudgings, askings, and turn-downs; and the ease with which all this leads into the saloon.

A saloon is usually warm, and a jobless man is usually

cold. I certainly was this morning at the gate, though many's the time to-day I've blessed the man who sold me my sheepskin. It's also, usually, well-lighted. That seems to give the eyes the feeling of a sort of spiritual heat —well-desired after straining them to watch for the gang-boss to appear.

My particular bar-keep friend here by the labor office in the cheap rooming-house district seems a sort of traffic cop, Bradstreet's, and Pilgrim's Progress. He appears to think it all a part of his job.

"See what Jim gave to me to keep for him," said another bar-tender to him—and showed him a fat roll of bills.

"Yes," said my friend, "he asked *me* to keep it for him last night, but I was too well tanked myself to make it safe to take it. The fellow was a friend o' mine, you know," he added to me.

To-day my three days' beard made me appear too rough to dare look in decent people's faces on the street. A little girl I passed in a nice residential district was evidently afraid of me. That's not pleasant.

CHAPTER II

IN A TEN-THOUSAND-MAN-POWER STEEL PLANT

Stackton,
Monday, February 3.

I feel a lot better than most princes feel nowadays—a whole lot better. I've got a job!

After lying awake most of the night in a dirty, top-story, stale-smelling, enormously noisy three-dollars-a-week room, I went over to that same plant gate again at six-forty-five, and after an endless hour tried to wig-wag the labor gang-boss and later the works superintendent.

"Nothin' doing to-day," was the answer. "Try again at six this evening."

The same thing at another big mill a few doors down.

By luck a car came by just then, labelled for a famous steel town; so I jumped on and shortly found myself in an employment office filled to the ceiling with a coughing, swearing, smoking, ill-smelling gang of fifty representatives of all the known races, including Mexicans, negroes, Indians, and Turks. Up at the window finally I was taken on as "labor."

The boy was slow enough in asking all manner of questions—talking through two misplaced holes in plate-glass certainly makes a bad go for any real exchange of facts or ideas. The young clerks supposed to do the hiring gave most of their time to tickling the backs of the necks or the much-exposed chests of the young stenographers, while my newly hired or unhired associates looked on and let out grunts of impatience and disapproval in as many tongues as Babel ever knew.

Finally a policeman came in and very roughly ordered: "Everybody out—clean outa here, you!—Unless you got a ticket—or are a-waitin' to see the doctor."

Nobody could tell whether it was because they had hired enough for the day or what. Having a ticket I stayed for the doctor. My, but he is a sour one! When one fellow looked at the numbers with one eye (the other being covered with a card) and mistook an "8" for a "6," he exploded with an oath, as if he considered it a personal insult. Later we undressed and were tested for heart, lungs, hernia, deformities, identifying marks, etc. Then we dressed and got cards to a company boarding-house until we could get settled.

The dirtiest, rankest outfit imaginable! Even the "fo'-castle" on our cattle-boat out of Boston was less so.

I asked the fat, jolly woman in charge if she had any single or small rooms. She threw up her hands and laughed: "My God, no! Man alive, no!"

However, she's a good sort. She showed me out past the spilled garbage-cans and pointed to another street where I could rent a better room if I had the money. I've found a fair place there with an American housewife in charge—much better and cleaner than the city room where I sit now. Both cost three dollars, and both required the money in advance. To-morrow morning, after ten or twelve hours' work in the labor gang, I guess it won't make much difference where or what my room is.

Yesterday, by the way, at a meeting for organizing the steel workers, the speaker was apparently willing to be a Bolshevist or anything else if that would help his case for unionism.

"We've got Chicago all in, also Joliet; Gary is eighty per cent ours. A fine beginning in Cleveland and Youngstown. We're after an eight-hour day and higher wages. When we get eight hours we'll go after seven and, if there

are idle men still, then six. . . . No man's wife or baby has a better right to anything in this world—*anything*—than *yours*. If we could rid the world of bankers, lawyers, brokers—parasites all—we'd have all that we earn. But if you will join the union we'll get everything anyway."

All delivered in a smooth, jolly, and most effective way. The men seemed to think it very "straightforward and blamed sensible!" I hadn't supposed many union men were so extreme as that. Of course, I don't suppose he'd shoot the bankers and others, but he sure would make 'em go to work—that is, with their hands. What function or reward would be left for brains and other than manual ability was not mentioned. Still I had the feeling that if he thought he could get men into his union without talking so much violence he'd be happy to drop the rough stuff.

Stackton,
Tuesday, February 4.

Did I work? Why, I found more work than I had supposed was still in the civilized world! Twelve hours of the hardest kind of back-testing labor under what I would call difficult conditions.

Here's what has happened to me and my search for the experience of hard labor:

At four-thirty I sat down in the company boarding-house to meat stew, plenty of bread and stewed tomatoes, with two white men—may have been Americans, but probably weren't—and ten Mexicans of various classes, including a couple of Indians.

With the landlady's package of thick sandwiches, cake, and an apple, I reported as per orders to the employment office and was shortly sent with others under a foreign-born worker to the labor boss.

After getting our brass numbers we took our shovels out of a shanty, went up past most of the fourteen big open-

hearth furnaces, and finally reached one being torn down for rebuilding. We deposited our coats in various places —there were no lockers—and proceeded to get busy.

We began at five-thirty—three of us Americans, one Italian boy, one Mexican, one Greek, and several Slavic and Russian fellows—all of them hardly able to say more than a very few English words, though they had all been in this country a number of years. It was bricks and brick-bats, and then more bricks and more "bats." We shovelled or pitched broken bricks into big ladles or boxes in the "cinder-pit" beneath us at the back of the furnace; we piled good ones; we took turns getting into the hot ruins of the furnace substructure and lifted and tossed and shovelled them up to the platform for the others to carry and shovel. Occasionally we rested a few moments. At all times we sweat—especially when down in the ruins. Indeed we had trouble to keep from fainting with the heat as we got farther down into the hot "down-take" or vertical passageway at the end of the furnace. After an hour or two the Greek grew so dizzy that he was let off from his turn of going down—which meant more frequent turns for the rest of us.

Always bricks, bricks, and more bricks—hot, cold, and medium—till back and arms whispered to suggest that we double-cross bricks the rest of our natural lives. After a day or two of bricks had passed, I asked somebody, "What time?" and was informed "Oh, about nine-t'irty." I never was so surprised and disappointed. But I couldn't stop moving those bricks (I hate to think how I feel about bricks) until finally, at the end of a Philadelphia week, twelve o'clock came and we could eat our lunch out of our bags—a half-hour—and then start moving more bricks until six A. M.

At that, I came through as well as any, partly, perhaps, because I had more in my mind. In between I was learning

about open hearths in which the steel is made, and cinder-pits in which it is "tapped" from the furnaces into the great ladles, and then poured into the ingot moulds. I wished for my painter friends—for more magnificent scenes there never were! Too many bricks in my back to try to describe it now—but I was happy to be at last in the midst of, and a part of, so fiery and stupendous a spectacle.

Must not take time, either, to give my first impressions of what is mainly responsible for the attitude of all of us toward brick-bats—namely, the twelve-hour shift. When I started in I figured I'd keep going as long as I could and loaf after I was played out. I couldn't get on with the programme. First the little Italian boy tapped me on the shoulder and advised "Lotsa time! Take easy!" I slowed down a notch or two. A little later the Russian, wiping off the sweat as he sat for a moment on a pile of bricks, cautioned: "You keel yourself. Twelve hours long time." Finally, after every one had remonstrated, I got down to a proper gait—so you'd have to sight by a post to see if I was moving. But at that I guess they knew better than I—I'm certainly tired enough as it is.

But we were not the only ones who tried to adapt the job to our capacities. A large part of the after-midnight portion, our boss sat with his head on his hands and slept while we kept on working at, say, fifty-five per cent regular "load." At about four he varied the monotony by taking us out in the rain to carry in some back-breaking iron roof-beams for the rebuilt furnace. After that it was a contest to see who could keep out of his sight and move the fewest bricks. At five everybody sat down and smoked and dozed, waiting for five-fifty to start back with our shovels to the shanty. As a matter of fact, we had given all the energy we had.

I was, of course, new and green. That's true; and that's why I came through so well. Those on the turn day after

day—or night after night—gave considerably less than I because they had less to give. After several hours of sleep I have less to give to-night than I had last night.

I'll take another hour of sleep and get into my working-clothes for supper at my new boarding-house, take my package, and start again to cover that long, long trail a-winding between five-thirty and midnight, and that longer, longer trail from twelve-thirty to six. And at the end of the week of night work and of another week of day work I'll talk it over with my back and my bones and my muscles, and my hopes of happiness in this life, and get my Greek and Mexican and Italian friends to do the same, and we'll see what we think;—or better, enormously better, what we feel (because a fellow *can't* think and work twelve hours with a shovel and brick-bats, but goodness, how he can *feel!*) about the twelve-hour shift for manual labor. Remembering, of course, that we get 45 cents an hour, and time-and-a-half for over eight hours—that's forty-five times fourteen, which equals $6.30 per turn. Not bad pay.

Stackton,
February 5.

Too dog-tired for pushing a train of thought with a pen. Here's why:

Midnight.—Eating a good lunch packed by my new landlady (seven dollars the week) while seated up by the warm "slag-vent" at the back of a hot furnace after shovelling, throwing, and carrying brick-bats and hard "cinder" out of the bottom of our same old torn-down No. 13, steadily from 5.30.

12.30 A. M.—Back to the shovel and cinder, and aching, shovel-worn forearms.

2.30.—Constant shovelling, always within a few feet of a noisy chisel eternally put-put-ing like a machine gun, chattering and biting and scolding at the adamantine

"cinder." (Taught how to operate it—very heavy, hard, jumpy work—by a negro and a friendly Spaniard.) Sorer forearms. Less supervision—boss reported asleep.

Wonderful views of pourings across the cinder-pit, upturned empty ladles soaring back to their stands, like views of heaven for beauty (too tired to describe now); dragon-like "mixer" which tilts its mouth and its hulk to receive or give out its 250 tons of yellow hot iron; glorious graphite sparklets poured from small ladle, which goes from the mixer to the fronts of the furnaces to give the drink of hot "pig" as needed for the steel.

Less shovellings, more carryings and throwings—wrists too tired for shovelling; head thumping from that eternal machine gun of a drill.

4.00 o'clock.—Thank God! Only one hour more!

5.00.—Everybody swears, quits, sighs for six.

5.55.—Shovel shanty—shovels deposited. Wait for whistle around small stove—everybody silent, groggy, heads on hands. Bosses loud in Slavic mixed with American profanity.

6.00.—Ah!—whistle at last! Everybody jumps and wearily starts home through the dark and snow.

6.45.—Bath finished. (Thank the Lord for hot water!) Go for sausage and cakes.

7.45.—Into bed. (Thank the Lord also for clean sheets!)

3.30.—Awake. Go to work? All in favor—? Wrists vote "No." Neck and shoulders vote "No." Compromise arranged—more sleep.

4.15.—Write diary in bed.

4.45.—(Three minutes from now) get up, put on dirty clothes laid off only a few minutes on other side of that blessed sleep. Boarding-house, supper, package lunch, and——

5.30.—Show number check to gate policeman, report to labor shanty and repeat as before till midnight.

There's one day from the life of the open-hearth laborer in Stackton.

Stackton,
Wednesday, February 12.

Well, I will say that the ten-hour day turn is enormously easier than the twelve-hour night shift. But when begun Monday morning immediately after a week of night work totaling eighty-seven hours—we did seventeen hours up to Sunday noon—it is not particularly conducive to an enthusiastic picture of life in general. A hot bath and clean clothes, after taking off unbelievably dirty and sweaty working togs, and shaking them out of the window (shovelling up soot at the bottom of a hot, drafty chimney is *hot and dirty!*) does marvels to set you up sufficiently to eat supper ravenously. But shortly after that you again feel as though it might be well to go to bed to get ready for more labor—or else try a movie or some other form of passing time removed as far as possible from both mental and physical effort.

If this town were asked to put its views into words it would ponder hardly a moment before condensing it into three words—"*What the hell?*" From top to bottom that seems the general formula and prescription. It is, I'm sure, only the result, or at least the symptom, of the general overwork.

The gang bosses, at least those of the labor gangs, seem to be the worst examples of the what-the-hell philosophy. Of course no question is, apparently, ever asked regarding any matter whatsoever in the plant except in the name of the Devil's abode. But our bosses can put into it an amount of heat and steam which makes it really terrifying to the tired worker who perhaps took ten or fifteen more minutes than positively necessary to "catch-drink-water"—as these bosses would say in their broken English—or who sat down because no boss gave him any orders at the moment. But

"what-the-hell" can come from anything whatever—very often from the foreman's own failure to give proper instructions.

"T'row bricks offa track—over dere!"

Everybody throws bricks in the general direction of boss's fingers.

Fifteen minutes later, boss returns——

"What da hell! Why you t'row bricks over damn ventilator? No can work furnace. Me tell you t'row bricks over dere."

I presume the bosses are quite as tired as the rest of the crowd because they spend just as many hours in the plant as we do—though they seldom touch shovel, bar, or brick—and are supposed to worry about getting the job done. Which last is the *very last* thing any of us under them ever worry about—unless it's an especially easy job, when whispers go 'round—"Dees fine job—take easy—mebbe make last all day."

But don't get the idea that the average labor boss really does any head work—or lets anybody else do it.

To-day six or eight of us were taking the very heavy checker-brick out of one of the checker-chambers, or large rooms under the "floor" of the furnaces, and so on a level with the cinder-pit. Here the bricks are laid at right angles to each other with square air spaces in between like checkerboards. The great roomful of square-set fire-brick thus serves to catch and retain the heat from the air and smoke passing through it from the furnace on the way to the stack in order to give it back to the cold air from outside which enters the furnace during every alternate half-hour or so when the draft is reversed by the first or second helpers in charge—that alternate direction of the draft through alternate sets of the "checkers" enables the "regenerating furnace" to keep getting hotter and hotter till the "charge" of metals is melted, the carbon brought to the right proportion, and

the steel is made. Another dozen or more of us were tossing these bricks from man to man till they were piled up high against the wall of the building—the soot having dropped off them meanwhile. At the same time an Indian (from Mexico) high up on practically the same pile, was tossing them down via an equally long line of men into the next checker-chamber of the same furnace. When I diplomatically suggested that the piling up seemed unnecessary, the answer of course was, "What the hell!" Later the piling was stopped, and a great long line of about ten men pitched brick from one to another needlessly for a distance of thirty feet till I lost my temper and the boss finally arranged a line of about ten feet, whereby the bricks came from one chamber and went back into the other—with a saving of about eight men's time.

The men, of course, get to feeling that their work is never done. They have not the slightest interest in what it means or how it affects the operations of the mill around them because, I *will* say, nobody tries very hard to give it to them. It is all just a matter of doing as little work as the boss will allow.

Last week I tried to get the good notice of the different overseers by sticking close to my knitting. The bunch, of course, discouraged it—"What the hell! Lotsa time"—and the bosses noticed me only when, after a long turn of work, I rested a moment. Their notice was the usual "Hey, dere! What da hell! Do you t'ink dis sleeping place?"

Not always is this query put in a mean way. But it simply expresses complete lack of effort to secure interest or to give instruction. The only thing in the world these "boys" have to give, or are asked to give, is their physical strength. They are hardly to be blamed if they try to guard their only capital by as many breathing-spells and as slow motions as the boss will stand for.

Here's an example in "physical arithmetic":

From Monday evening to Monday evening, on night turn, a man here works eighty-seven out of the week's one hundred and sixty-eight hours. Of the remaining eighty-one he sleeps, at seven hours a day, a total of forty-nine; eats not over ten; walks or travels in a street-car, say, ten; dresses, shaves, tends furnace, undresses, winds alarm-clock and gets occasional drink, say eight. What does he think the rest of the time—during all those remaining four hours!

To save turning over to the end of the book, I'll slip anybody the answer: *"What the hell!"*

Stackton,
Thursday, Feby 13.

We laborers spend most of our time down-stairs around the checker-chambers beneath the furnace floor. Lately I summoned my courage and butted into what I supposed was a company restaurant, but which I now find is run by a group of open-hearth men. They are not listless like the workers down-stairs; they're very husky and seem trained down to the bone. But even the cattle-boat fo'c'sle never furnished such profanity. As they eat, their language is a goulash of blasphemy, obscenity, and filth. Of course, it's mostly in fun and for show. But even at that I would not have believed it possible of "bums"—and these are mostly Americans earning around ten to fifteen dollars a day.

Of course, every man working down in the hot and sooty checker-chambers with a boss's eye everlastingly on him, dreams to become a helper on the "floor" up-stairs, where a man is a part of a crowd which gets paid according to the tonnage of good metal it gets out of the furnace—and paid well. But if he can't be up there on the floor with him, the checker-brick tosser can at least begin to talk and think and swear like him—so, what the hell!

Any attempt to abate this line of talk should be based on the proper understanding of it. I am sure it has two causes. First, it is a sort of psychological "protective behavior." It is the mind's way of saying: "The only way I can accommodate myself to this fatigue is by not caring—by not taking it seriously." By the same token it is a way of pouring pep into yourself by putting, as it were, a whip into your language—by steam-heating your talk. It makes your words, in a short-sighted sort of way, more galvanic on yourself, and presumably on others, and so makes a short cut to the maximum effect of your breath on yourself and others which ordinarily can be secured, or at least aimed at, by the appeal of logic or good-will—these last being impossible because of fatigue.

Then, second: Some one having started the ball rolling because he was tired and needed either the protection or the stimulus of super-heated language, standards are created for a sort of God-and-man-insulting upstandingness which requires everybody else to measure up by going him one better. The trouble is that, like the dope fiend, who gets no "kick" at all from what was once a huge dose, these "helper" chaps now have a hard time finding any emphatic way to express themselves. What can a man do when the most ordinary and inoffensive chair or tea-cup or sandwich is condemned to the uttermost, and when you call your best friend flippantly a triple or quadruple compound of the foulest and loathsomest possible conceptions—what can a fellow do when he really wants to use strong language?

As it looks now, the whole thing seems a combination of hard-working, husky humans trying to lessen the friction of circumstance by throwing out a sort of oil film of "I don't care," and then trying to hold their own in association with each other in meeting the husky demands of their husky jobs.

It will be interesting to see if this appears true after my observations are better seasoned with the later months.

If what is here set down doesn't make good sense, it's because of the disease described—overwork.

And now that I've begun too late to get proper relief from profanity, I'll try the only other available remedy, sleep.

Stackton,
Saturday eve, February 15.

If I recall rightly, I set down a complaint some time ago about the finishing of a seventeen-hour turn of work, after twelve-hour nights. I apologize, in the light of what is soon to get under way, so soon that I must shortly jump into bed and try to be a sort of slumber camel, and store up sleep for the long desert trip ahead.

I am instructed to report to-morrow morning at seven, ready to be on the job until seven Monday morning!

And everything requires my following instructions.

I have been promoted, thanks to my friend, Bill, the only English-speaking boss on the gang. During the last few days he has been sending me, as almost the only white American in the gang, about the plant on various errands, with his kindly "Keep your eyes open and learn the plant." Twice I went on the little dinky engine and helped get coal from the chutes over in the yard, hitherto unknown. There for the first time I saw the gang which handles the new brick and consists of about thirty women, mostly foreign, fat, and of course smudgy, in their bloomer overalls, sweaters, and "boudoir caps"!

Twice he named me to go with small gangs that loaded great chains onto a hand-car and pushed them—or in one place coasted down-hill with them, yelling gleefully like children, all of us—away over to the blacksmith's shop. Yesterday the same gang moved other things, including a great quantity of nickel used for giving a certain consistency to the armor-plate for battleships.

These trips gave a chance to see the hugeness of the plant and to duck in and see some of the monster rolling-

mills where ingots of five to fifteen tons, lemon hot, are swung up out of the "soaking-pits" where they are reheated after being brought from the open-hearth pits, and are carried through the air like mere checker-brick, to come out of the rolls as finished angle-iron, "I" beams, or "channels" for great construction enterprises. They also helped me see various jobs—as one day when I worked in the "stock-yard."

This is where the iron "charging-boxes" are loaded with the various things which go into the furnaces for "composing" the steel. It is interesting and also, I'd say, fairly dangerous. Hook in hand, you stand on top of the "boxes" as the huge magnet comes soaring along with a ton or two of iron and steel beams, or plates, or a dozen sheaves of iron scrap clinging to it from the unseen force of magnetism caused by the electric current. Some of the plates seem to be hanging only by the skin of their magnetic teeth, as it were—by "the hair of their magnetized heads" might be better, because all the scale and other particles on the surface of the metal are standing upright exactly like the hair of a man's head when he passes near a flying belt, or any other electric "field." But everything hangs there until you help, by your long hook, to swing it around so everything can fall into the boxes, and you yell or motion, "Drop!" Then the current stops and everything clatters down with the hollow noise which is the distinctive sound of the town. Then you jump down into the boxes and hook and push and lift the various pieces until they are even enough to be pushed into the furnace-doors, and emptied like so many dust-pans by the charging-machine—meanwhile ducking or jumping to keep from being under the next load that sails by overhead to your "buddy," or to avoid being run over by the dinky train on its way to some hungry furnace inside.

I was sorry to learn that the following day Mike, our

CHARGING AN OPEN-HEARTH FURNACE

A crane charging an open-hearth furnace with the iron "boxes" of "scrap" or other material for making the steel

very strenuous and dare-devil Irish crane-man, had his face burned, though not badly, by the monster current he makes perform for him. It is thrilling to see the doings of an unseen force on such familiar terms. It makes you shiver, somehow, to see a great plate of steel, weighing several hundred pounds, rise up and *fly* a foot or so upward in order to obey the beckoning of the unseen Force!

The Slavic boy, however, seemed little thrilled by his job.

"I wor'rk, wor'rk always every day, every week, ten hours days and twelve hours nights—alla time—no 'spell' (rest) lak' you have in labor gang—and alla time every damn furnace hongry."

This knowledge of the plant's doings and geography helped, doubtless, to Bill's taking me to the head millwright of our department this morning. That gentleman gave me an interesting and quick-moving day. I was very proud to pass my brick-tossing friends who looked with envious eyes on my oil-can or wrench. These are, it seems, nothing less than badges of nobility in the steel-mill peerage. Like a hawk I studied the every move of my superiors as they took me around and told me how to grease the various plungers that raise the furnace-doors, and to oil the pumps or the mixer, which lowers its great hulk and pours out of its head, precisely like a grand-opera dragon, the yellow pig-iron for those insatiable furnaces.

In fact, I'm getting on quite familiar terms with the whole open-hearth establishment—and more and more anxious not to disappoint my kindly "buddies." American, Greek, Spanish, Mexican, Italian, Irish—black and white—we talk over our hearts' desires and the good and bad points of our respective jobs in a polygot but expert language, and come surprisingly close to each other. My foreign languages help a lot. Not that I can carry on a deep conversation with my Italian, Greek, or Spanish friends. But

being able even to start and go some distance in their tongue, and to talk about their country—"a ship I worked on made them ports, ya see"—seems to prove to them my good-will, and to help immensely toward getting theirs.

It's going to be hard to leave the place and these new pals when the time is up. But meanwhile I must play the game as if my physical, and especially my financial, life depended on it if I am to get the "feel" as the other boys have it—and to them a millwright's job at two cents an hour more, with less strain on back and arm and leg, less dirt, and with tools to carry around in the sight of all men, is something to dream about during the long hours of throwing, tossing, and shovelling brick.

So the biggest thing before me just now in all the world is to come out under the wire *day after to-morrow morning* with my head still up and ready, after a few hours' sleep Monday, to report again Monday night—and so make sure of my millwright's job.

And that means set the alarm-clock for six, as usual, and jump into bed this minute.

Stackton,
Feby. 17.

Too busy to get much time for my diary; but here are a few things which go on in the work:

Apparently, a labor gang in a steel-plant does surprisingly little conversing. But the occasional discussions cover a broad field. One night, for instance, one of the Mexicans and a West Indian negro argued whether there is a heaven or hell.

"You say hell after die?" The Mexican sounded both his "H" and also a guttural "K" in his "hell." "I say *now*—and no more after die. We work over dere on dat furnace. We burn shoes. We sweat. Dat hell—hell *now*. When we die, no more sweat—no more work—no more not'ing—all dead, no feel not'ing, just dead."

To the rest of us taking our "spell" after a half-hour of wielding sledge or crowbar on the bricks of a furnace-roof, which had fallen in on the "bath" of hot metal, while standing on boards which frequently caught fire from the heat of the bath which still lay beneath us, it sounded reasonable. The negro, however, was too well grounded in his faith to be floated away by the Mexican's conviction, even aided by his own perspiration, and stood pat in good style. The Mexican made it evident that he had not got his advanced thinking out of books when, a moment later, he expressed his belief that by virtue of their "forty, fifty, mebbe sixty, year of alla time study boo-k," doctors could restore the dead to life at will, and only let people die, because, forsooth, people insist on having children, so that that is the only way to keep the country from becoming too congested.

But mostly the gang talks of jobs—how many hours, how much pay, any chance to "catch sleep," hot or cold, hard or easy, dirty or clean, good boss or bad, etc., etc., without end. Every one has had personal experience with a surprising number, to be sure, so that they can weigh good points against bad with the expert's eye.

Now that the permanent owner of the millwright vacancy has returned—it was a bad burn that laid him off, I learn —I am reduced to the ranks again. But I can be thankful for the glimpse the week gave of another line of working and thinking around an open-hearth.

The job was to keep the furnaces, pumps, and other monsters of the show in good humor by seeing that they get all the gas, steam, water, and grease they needed. A certain pleasurable sense of power and familiarity comes from taking a great oil-can and perhaps a bucket of grease, and going down among the wheels and cylinders that turn the colossal mixer. Likewise from clambering in under the powerful charging machines to tighten their bolts with

wrench and sledge so that they can properly feed the huge dust-pans of scrap-iron, billets, etc., into the furnaces.

The real work came with the care of the "guns," which shot hot tar by steam pressure into the furnaces. When my chief first adjusted these, I could do little more than hand up tools, or go "catch" water to pour on the occasional flames of the scaffold where he stood to work!—so near was he to the hot furnace end wall. Later I got to changing, myself, these guns or burners when clogged by the fierce heat. A hot job, for sure! Through the hole in the bricks the heat would burn gloves or face or hand almost in an instant. When used to stop the heat, a board would blaze in a few seconds. Otherwise clothes began to steam and smoke. But it was all worth learning. I'm only sorry to have become familiar with a pipe-wrench so late in life —in spite of the fact that a burning glove made me drop it on my toe, so it's as sore as its mate on my other foot, which suffers from a checker-brick that broke and fell on it ten days ago, and sent me limping off to the doctor's.

As in the labor gang the outstanding feature of millwrighting is the long hours:

Sunday double turn (every other week).....	24 hours
5 nights at 13 hours.....	65 "
Saturday night.....	15 "
	104 hours

Night-turn week you do nothing but work and eat and sleep—and not too much of the last two, either. You have a half-hour each night for your dinner—meaning, by the way, three more, or 107, hours under the plant roof. And you are pretty tired for a heavy breakfast. Unless you cut down your sleep, you have a short time for supper at four-forty-five or five before going to work again. By saving part of my "midnight supper" for a morning snack, I cut out breakfast, got into a bath-tub at seven-ten, and then

into bed at seven-thirty for sleep until three-thirty or four, with only a few minutes for letters or papers before putting on working clothes again. I'm told that ordinarily millwrights get more sleep "on turn" than our tar-guns gave us—though we did get some.

With nothing but sleep in between the various nights, one turn seemed only the continuation of another, and the whole week felt like one continuous performance.

In talking with the open-hearth floorworkers I found they felt the same way about their fourteen-hour night-turn.

"This week just don't count—a man ain't no good to nobody, including himself, and how the nights of the day-turn week do go by before you get around to enjoyin' 'em," said one first helper.

"It's bearable," said another, "when you can really catch your sleep. But when the flu was here, 'twas awful! Nearly all of us had to wait on our sick families—if we didn't have it ourselves—and for weeks we just went without sleep, seemed like, unless we could catch some around here on turn; and that was hard because, of course, every shift was short-handed."

I know now that such a worker simply doesn't have time to study or to grow or to learn English, or to keep a live eye on anything. I am constantly surer that one result of it all is that "what-the-hell" attitude—a man has got to take on the self-protection of the callousness which profanity represents or else get out of the long-hour end of the business.

Another result of eight working-days one week and six the next, year in and year out, is, I'm sure, the local and highly familiar celebrity known as the "whiskey-beer." After every shift the saloon at the corner has its customers lined up three deep and fully one-half take a "large small" glass of whiskey followed by a big beer. They down it

quickly and walk away straight for home without the slightest joviality. But all say one or two of these "shots" helps them get a good day's sleep.

Frequent discussion is given to which saloon serves the best and biggest whiskey. Otto, who has millwrighted here for nearly thirty years, has worked his fourteen-turn fortnights with only two days off in two years. That's *every day* except two—Sundays and holidays *not excepted.* He—with others—says you've "got to be blamed careful about getting lay-offs or they'll tell you there's others at the gate that wants your job more'n you do." He seems to believe one whiskey-beer pretty regular stuff for him, and that, if particularly tired three can be carried without discomfort or loss of decorum. Four requires hurrying home and to bed to avoid trouble.

"Five or six whiskey-beers, yes, all right. Fifteen?—too much," a Slavic laborer argued yesterday quite seriously.

The heaters and other regular steel-workers tell of wanting everything to have a "kick" in it:

"Why, I remember last summer I had to do something for a good time, and damn me if I didn't go off for a trip to Cleveland and spend $100 in three days!"

I know how they feel. If you're tired and are going to meet the financial loss of laying off for a day or two, you don't want just ordinary amusements. You want something with a punch; you want something to jar you and give you a real sensation. An ordinary show or movie is too tame. I'll gamble that the eight-hour shift will bring an improvement in the local burlesque show!

Stackton,
February 26.

Four weeks is a short time for any serious diagnosis, but I'll wager my two arms—and throw in two bruised toes—that there is a big and vital connection between all three

of the outstanding institutions of this town—to wit, the alarm-clock and long hours, the whiskey-beer, and the God-damn. Garbage would make a fourth—in the quarters where most of the workers—the foreign-born—live.

I came here with the feeling that good treatment by company and foremen is what the workers want above all. The company evidently believes that what they want most is lots of work to get lots of money. We're both right and both wrong. Men won't appreciate anything under heaven—not even good pay and steady work—when they are dead-dog tired, or suffering from that chronic listlessness which is not exactly fatigue but comes from the two-days-off-in-two-years habit. And no boss can be asked to treat his men decently if the hours make both them and him stale and crabby, and if almost everything around them all (with the exception of clean toilets and cold drinking water) is dirty and disorderly. So it's futile to argue which is more important—pay, hours, treatment, or shop conditions. They're *all* indispensable—like all four cylinders. If each helps the other, the load is carried easily; everybody's happy, and no knocks develop. But no one or two cylinders can do it alone against the drag of the others.

Even the huge mixer—it always makes me think of some vast machine from Mars—has to have gas to burn in it—that's its food and drink, its *money*. Also bricks and metal and water of the right sort—they determine its *conditions*. And, finally, lots and lots of grease—that's good *treatment*. It has to have them *all*.

The rumor keeps up that the "floor" will go to the eight-hour shift next month. But there are many sceptics besides Terence at the boarding-house.

"Aw, sure an' I've heard tell o' thot for the last few years. I'll belave it when I see the signed notice and not a day before!"

When it does come it will, of course, bring the need of

finding thousands more men—and that won't be easy as soon as times get good again. Those thousands more men, too, will make necessary a lot more houses than this town has—and they'll pretty surely be expensive to build and high to rent. And, still further, the shorter hours, even with some kind of a compromise on wages, will make steel cost the public more and so raise the H. C. L., *unless* the workers do more per hour. But, personally, I am sure they will do just that if the change is accompanied by bosses who depend more on leadership, head-work, and skill for getting their results from their men than on proddings and strong, superheated language. These are necessary on tired, long-hour men; something else can be counted on to obtain proper results with active, short-houred workers. If this is given in a way to get the co-operation of the workers, the price of steel need not be greatly increased, and a lot of workers and their families will be made happier than they now are. I know it *should* be done. I'm sure anything with so much human "should" behind it *can* be done.

It's possible these long hours have "got" me more than they have the others. But I honestly don't believe it—I'm greener than they, but not so listless to begin with. It's more likely because I have been doing more work than they; almost every day with the unskilled men gives more skill in learning from them how *not* to work. I find, for instance, that we two new men shovelled just twice as much on that "cinder" in the down-take as a more experienced man and I did a few nights later. He insisted that each of us take turns at sleeping while the other worked—especially while our boss slept. With their whiskey and listlessness they feel the work, I'm sure, as much as I do, if not more. And they were more tired than I when I began.

Stackton,
February 28.

My fellow-workers seem to have trouble believing I'm an American because, they say, "No white American work in steel-plant labor gang unless he' nuts or booze-fighter."

One Mexican is sure I'm French, and asks me in Spanish: "For why do you deny your Patrida?"

But the point is this: none of them hesitates a moment to talk freely to me about plant or other matters—about how he feels and thinks about all sorts of things. That disposes of what was my chief fear when I started out.

Among the upper group of workers—the foremen, millwrights and furnace-helpers—every one seems to dislike our Slavic labor boss, Pete. He is said to have no friends and to care for none. He certainly is a tyrant, scolding or firing somebody most of the time.

"Say you, there, Andy, you go to work to-day, huh?" he yelled a few days ago to a harmless young Slavic boy —as usual at the top of his voice, with his eyes blazing. "What the h—— you mean come here with necktie on! Me foreman and me no necktie. You take dat one off —— —— quick, or I give you 'time' and you go home and wear it so long you —— please!"

Mike, one of the Polish bosses under him—and he hates him, too—was kicking about the H. C. L.:

"Wy, poor working man no can get drunk now. Whiskey-beer twenty cents!"

When I suggested that almost any man could afford a good spree on four or five he came back with:

"Four—five! Wy, I bet you hundred dollars my friend and me we drink fifteen whiskey-beer, go home twelve o'clock, and be here seven o'clock morning go to work!"

"Well, Ah don't know how Ah'm goin' to do with only eight hours as long as groceries stay up—unless Ah gets

more per hour," says George, the colored laborer, when the crowd talked of the rumored short day.

Mac, one of the most successful first helpers—his pay-checks for every fifteen days, based mainly on tonnage, run around $175 to $225—opines:

"Fine! Of course the shorter day will probably cost me money, but it will give me more chance to enjoy bein' alive. And it will give more men work, too."

"Unless they get the eight-hour shift," my landlady advises me, "don't bring your wife and kids here. They ain't no easy jobs here. Everybody has to work dreadful hard—even the women. They never get through at all keepin' things clean. It's a dirty, dirty place."

She is pale, with sunken eyes. She has four children to provide for in her widowhood, and from four-thirty A. M. works a long shift cooking meals for us hungry workers.

My month's experience certainly confirms her. After the millwright helper returned I tried to get one of the furnace jobs. Yesterday and to-day I succeeded. But arms and neck and shins have paid the price of the work of the man in the "cinder-pit." Though connected with one furnace, I am expected to help with the tapping of every one of the active six furnaces, the seventh being "down" and under repair. That means, usually, helping work the "rabbles," or huge iron pokers, to stir the bath or open the tap-hole, shovelling in the heavy manganese, and, after the "heat" is run out (which means the steel and not the heat, for that stays to burn your face), "making bottom" by shovelling in the dolomite to give the "cinder-lining" or unmeltable hearth and walls for holding the "bath" of molten metal. On his own and one other furnace the "cinder-pitter" or "third helper" is supposed to "work at the back." That means to help open up the tap-hole, shovelling out the red-hot dolomite; then when the white-hot steel is roaring and blazing into

POURING THE METAL INTO THE MOULDS

After the "heat" of "hot metal" is "tapped" out of the open-hearth furnace, the ladle is carried over to the platform (across the cinder-pit) where it is poured or "teemed" into the ingot moulds

the huge ladle, placed properly in its stand in the cinder-pit with its lip even with the floor, he must lift large paper sacks of coal to his shoulder, run toward the ladle, and with all his strength hurl them into the blazing, scorching torrent. Thereupon the flames, fed by the carbon, leap to the roof and the heat is fearful. Yesterday I certainly thought my face was gone for good and all when I tried to get near enough to get my sack—with every ounce of my strength exerted—into the ladle—and not *too* near! To-day I learned how to keep the sack before my face, watch carefully the platform's edge at my feet, and then, the moment it leaves my hands, to turn and run for a moment's cover behind the steel stanchion or pillar. After the coal is in, you and your buddy turn up your coat-collars, put your heads down, run out near the ladle, and madly shovel manganese into it—one hot job if ever I saw one! To-day, when I left a sweater on the steel post during the tapping, it was burned by sparks and ruined.

In all of these jobs there comes finally a skill which enables the experienced worker to do with sleight what the greenhorn has to do by main strength. The trouble is that no arrangements seem to be made for giving the greenhorn the proper instruction. So he learns only after the discomfort and more or less disgrace of initial failure. That causes him, as the Chinese say, to "lose face," just as I thought I had actually lost my face when I walked out to that ladle. Figuratively, too, I did "lose face," because, be it confessed sorrowfully, that first sack did not reach the ladle. That failure made me nervous the next time—and the railless platform and the blazing ladle full of splashing white metal makes it a bad place to be nervous in! So, too, in shovelling dolomite to reach the back wall of the biggest furnaces. To do it requires exactly the right combination of left foot far forward, arms and shovel swung far back just before your body stops advancing, immediate

full swing forward and upward, and then a quick get-away from the heat. To see a trained man do it is as satisfying as to see a golf expert perform. The boys whisper directions, but the first helper gets a man fussed by his curses. The whole gang sweats profusely, but the greenhorn suffers also from an inner sweat of the spirit—and his muscles pay the price in the extra effort until the trick is learned, at least to the point of quieting the boss helper. To-day I nearly broke my leg by driving my shovel into my shinbone with all my strength—caused by the boss's oaths.

I believe instruction could be given even to the labor gang—I'd like to give a talk on the art of shovelling. It would probably eliminate the foreman whose only word is an oath. That oath confuses the beginner and hardens the old hand by robbing him of his interest in the fine points of his job and forcing him, for his own self-respect, to take refuge in his "Aw, what the hell!"

But even as it is the men do take interest in their job. Yesterday two helpers had a knock-down fight—over a shovel! After six men had succeeded in pulling them apart—each with his hands full of the other fellow's clothes—the superintendent got nowhere at all by reminding them that the shovel actually belonged to the company. Each insisted:

"My shovel! I use it t'ree mont's. My shovel— He take it."

The satisfaction of possession surely does run strong in all these chaps. The charging-machine man fixes whirligigs and flags, and all sorts of paraphernalia on his machine. The laborer who gets hold of any excuse for a locker fixes it up with flags, looking-glass, and pictures from calendars, cigarette-boxes, and such like.

With the management's doings generally few seem to find much fault. "They're straight enough—that is, they won't rob you. Yes, they are good about giving steady

work, and that's a big thing. Of course, they're out for the *big* money, and they'll do most anything for that."

Incidentally, I think that last is one reason for a lot of soldiering—the everywhere visible disorder and waste of bricks, lumber, screws, bolts, etc. "Dees company wanta only *beega* money." "Why should they worry about gettin' back the six-thirty they pay me, huh?" is the answer of the men.

Beyond these few fundamentals, the workers seem to expect nothing from the company whatever. Nobody here has heard of representative committees of workers, and few seem to think it interesting. They have no relief society. To-day they were selling twenty-five-cent chances on a raffle for a five-dollar gold piece for the benefit of a sick worker!

Well, it all makes me feel that last Sunday's labor-leader has more justification than he should be allowed to have when he said:

"The Bolshevists, I tell you, men, will have a show here in this country *only* if industrial managers forget that we workers feel it our duty to think more highly of ourselves —take ourselves more seriously—now that the war has been won to make the world safe for democracy."

And yet very little evidence of anything like unrest is to be seen. Personally, from former acquaintance, I know that the highest company officials here are honest gentlemen, sincerely anxious to have friendly relations with their men. I am equally sure they do not realize how hard it is for men who work such long hours to have friendly relations with any thing or any body—nor how much organization there must be before the good-will of the officials can be transmitted far enough down along the line to touch the mind and the feelings—the life—of the member of the labor gang, especially if that member possesses the suspicions of a foreign tongue. For certainly these distrusts

of misunderstanding ought easily to be corrected. They ought not to be charged as inherent in the industrial system. They are simply the defects due to a lack of proper adjustment to certain requirements of human beings—especially when brought together in large numbers from all over the earth.

Here goes for a few more fine points with that wonderful symbol of civilization called a shovel. Then we'll call it enough for "Episode I" and try to find some other field for our labors.

CHAPTER III

IN A ROLLING-MILL

After a month at the steel plant it seemed proper to try for work at some other place. The rumor among the gang, however, was to the effect that jobs were very scarce. In order to play safe, therefore, I allowed the company to owe me the pay for the last two weeks, and so secured the promise of a job in case I failed to get the one I hoped for "back home in Cleveland."

After a few days there of passing most of my friends without their recognition, I took the train back to the same steel centre as before.

Millvale,
March 12th.

If there is one thing I have learned on my labor travels it is that "the job's the thing." Wages are interesting, but the *job* is the axis on which the whole world turns for the working man. If he has a job—even a poor one—he is at least established on a platform where he can stand for the present and plan for a better future. Without a job he is dislocated from his bread and butter, and also from his community and society in general. It's hard for him even to walk along the street with the same confidence—he feels as I imagine a bee feels that has been fired from the hive. If he has no job at a time like this, it's like a blow in the face to read in the morning paper:

"Pittsburgh reports a *surplus* of 12,000 laborers and 1,000 clerks, with a shortage of 1,700 miners. Cleveland reports surplus of 60,000, etc."

He reflects on the unattractiveness of mining, and

slouches all the more as he walks along the street and thinks about the sad possibility of saving his family by getting into the bread line a little later.

Yesterday the common-labor clerk in the U. S. Employment Office told me—in tones purposely loud enough to be heard by all the seventy-five or eighty negroes and others in the room: "Not a job in the house here"—and very considerately added as he looked me over: "Was you in the semi-skilled department?"

I went up, but got a discouraging answer.

"Not a request for a millwright in the place. Now if you was a tailor, or a baker, a busheler, egg-candler, or a die-maker—I've requirements for 200 like them here, and those cards are another 200 there—and nobody yet to fill 'em."

In the hallway the blackboard called for "25 chippers" and others of the like, but specified "*Only foreigners.*"

At several private agencies it was "Not a single job to be had—no, nothin' of no kind at all"—usually in a foreign accent. At one place a shipment was being made up of workers on a railway labor gang at forty cents an hour, but the man was letting it appear that he was very particular.

This morning I took the train up here. After sizing up what is a very well located and laid out town I went to a near-by garage—in the absence of the saloon—to get any helpful hints. Again the power of the name. When all the clerks of the employment office assured me there was no request for more workers, I asked to see Mr. L——, the superintendent of the open-hearth, as per the garage man. It worked. A policeman took me to him where I assured him I could be a very useful man to him. But there were "too many now, and I'm afraid I'll have to lay off some now that the soldier boys are coming back."

On my repeated cataloguing of my virtues as an "Ameri-

can-born, with high-school education," he said, "Well, maybe, if you can get a job meanwhile in some other department, for a lot of the boys tell me—especially the Greeks—that they're going back to the old country just as soon as they can."

So he gave me the name of the hot-mill superintendent. That man shook his head, but, on my pleading, gave my policeman escort the name of the cold-roll boss—"Take him to Jack J—— and see if he can use him for a little till L—— can take him."

And Jack—a hard-working but honest and square-looking chap—after several turn-downs, finally gave heed and said, "Well, mebbe to-morrow morning."

So I'm hoping that to-morrow's sun will look upon me in the respectability of the man with a job.

Millvale,
March 13th.

My present guide, companion, and boss, my alarm-clock, called me at five, and at six I was taken on! A few minutes after the doctor's examination my new boss assigned me to a quartet of men to run nice-looking bluish steel sheets of various lengths and thickness, or gauges, through the big and shining steel rolls on their way to go into the sides of automobiles. The whole group seemed to be Americans, and Dan, whose buddy I became, was fine in telling what was to be done and how.

So I've been picking up several thousand of these rectangular steel or "soft iron" sheets, shaking each loose so Dan could get his hands on it, and then together turning it over and on to the wooden stand or skid leading to the rolls, watching meanwhile for imperfections that mar the smooth and sensitive surface of the huge rolls or spoil the sheet's usefulness in an auto body. It gives a lot of exercise for the fingers in getting the thin sheet always from the

top, while the "simple twist of the wrist" required to turn the sheet over brings, finally, a lot of weariness and some pain to a few muscles. But outside of that the work is certainly not wearing nor unpleasant. And it's stimulating, too, to feel that besides my forty-two cents per hour, I share in the sum paid the group according to the number of sheets rolled.

So altogether I seem to be in the midst of a happy working community, both inside the plant and out, so far, at least, as first impressions are concerned. The town has a multitude of clean and pleasant-looking homes and yards —except the district where many foreign-born workers live, as dirty and unprosperous a place as one could wish to see.

The Americans seem friendly and surprisingly talkative, like the waitress in the restaurant who reported yesterday to a friend:

"Well, I was born bawlin' and my mouth ain't been shut since! If you don't believe it, ask my mother."

In the plant the cold rolls with the hot mills make a row nearly a quarter of a mile long. All the officials seem very much on the job, but very friendly. Drinking-water, sanitation, and restaurant all seem very good, and the whole place surprisingly clean. Also, I've so far heard nobody swear at me or anybody else.

All things taken together, although I've done a good turn of work since six o'clock, I feel almost as much a man of leisure as yesterday. Then I walked into the country where I finally hailed two men in charge of a coal-mine. They were apparently as much interested in my ignorance of coal-mines as I was in their knowledge, so they promptly filled their little lamps with carbide and water, and a few minutes later were answering my questions as we squatted on the coal-covered floor of a "room" with a low slate ceiling and a few hundred feet or so of solid hill above us. It made a highly educational afternoon as well as a delightful

loaf, for the hills at sunset were beautiful, and the air full of spring and pleasant promises.

To-day I felt like any working man would feel if his friends could be informed, an hour or two before quitting-time, that he was "Gone for the day." Because at three-thirty Dan said: "That's all they got for us to-day, boys. So we can quit, and these here slips of mine show that it's been a mighty good day for all of us."

Millvale,
Sunday morning,
March 16.

Two things are uppermost in my mind, after my two days as "roller's helper" on the cold rolls.

One is that as the result of the constant turning of those sheets, with the required twist o' the right wrist, I find myself for the first time in my life wishing I had a valet so he could negotiate all my buttons. They seem to exercise those same muscles and so exact a high cost in pain. But I imagine a few days more will make them used to it—by which time I'll hope to get a boost in the direction everybody covets—the hot mills, the home of heat—the sheets are rolled there out of the small, thick "sheet bar"—of hard work and "big money."

The other thing on my mind—a sort of soreness that is amazingly like the soreness in my muscles—is that my roller played me a low trick. After I had worked myself something more than half sick, broken several finger-nails, skinned several fingers and, of course, ruined a pair of canvas gloves in picking the sheets off the pile with constantly greater speed, I have learned to-day from better authority that he and his catcher get their bonus but not we helpers. In fact, the harder we work and the sooner we get through the day's run, the sooner our work and our pay stop!

Besides being sore at my immediate superior, I am won-

dering whether I should believe his other assurance—"If you work hard here, you're sure to get an early chance at the hot mills."

I wonder!

It will probably take a longer stay to know the town's possibilities for killing time. One of the movie emporiums seems to have good pictures and good music. At one of the two others, the pictures are O. K., but the music is excruciating. If I ever get the chance I think I'll suggest to the management that they endow good music in the town's movies. I know of no expenditure that would count so much here—unless it is a better library.

Pool-rooms and bowling-alleys are busy but apparently attract mostly young boys. In the Greek quarter the coffee-houses are evidently well patronized. I guess the Greeks, like their forebears in St. Paul's day, are addicted to discussing "some new thing." The skating-rink, according to my talkative waitress, "looks like a stable and gets pretty rough."

The main amusement factors seem to be the movies and the phonographs. There seems to be hardly a home without one of these last, and from appearances, an imposing and costly one. At almost any hour and in every street you hear them. The stores that sell them have customers in them, apparently, so long as they are open. And they certainly do give a lot of pleasure. I'm sure they are especially appreciated by rolling-mill men, who work in the midst of a rumble-clank-rumble that makes conversation practically impossible. A doctor friend in Boston claims to have made experiments which justify him in prognosticating what kind of recreation a worker's ears will hanker for if he can ascertain the noises of the daily job. Our ears, he says, crave a change of diet just as do our palates or our stomachs. I found myself, by the way, ordering at a hotel last week a dinner of peach fritters, ice-cream, cocoanut pie

and French pastry! Of course it was my palate's attempt to "get even" after four weeks of my Stackton landlady's veal stew and beans.

Listen! The phonograph down-stairs is reminding us of the "Long, long trail, a-winding." That means that the children are dressed, breakfast is over, and the day's loaf begun.

Considering that the State law closes all the movies, pool and billiard places, skating-rinks and library, and evidently the news-stand, I guess there's nothing for a non-club member to do but betake himself to church.

Later: I was the only one there who refused to stand up and vote in favor of a resolution affirming that the Christian Sabbath is the bulwark of our civilization, and calling down punishment on the pagan hands now being raised at the capital to overturn it by permitting the sacrilege of Sunday concerts and movies. As long as so many thousands are working eighteen and twenty-four-hour shifts on Sunday I can't seem to get "het up" over Sunday movies.

Millvale,
Wednesday Night,
March 19.

It's queer how little conversation I've run into anywhere about capital and labor, Bolsheviki and such things. There was certainly more of it at the boarding-house in *Stackton* than I've yet found here. But even there it was comparatively slight outside of the general and complete conviction that the same crowd that did everything in the mill to make "big money" was running the town, the State, and the country from the same single motive. "Vote? Why, they'll change or destroy everybody's vote here if they feel like it!" Only one speaker was extreme at the labor meetings, and even at these I never saw more than 400 in a hall seating a thousand.

No, I think Harden had it right when he said the other day: "Give the people food and work, and Bolshevism will vanish." At a boarding-house the men talk surprisingly little about anything, whether from distrust of each other or fatigue. A man eats silently, gets up, takes his dinner-pail, and walks out without a "So long" or anything. But, as far as I can see, the chaps who have regular jobs talk not about capital and labor, but about hours and wages, especially eight and twelve hour shifts, cost of living, prohibition and beer, vacations, lay-offs, tools, movies, and such-like matter-of-fact affairs. It was the unlucky men there at those old factory gates who showed their teeth when they were not taken on. To them a country which could show no way for converting brawn into bread seemed to be failing sadly and seriously. For them, I know, even a few days of such failure burns deep into their souls.

But on the job—well, take yesterday:

At five-thirty in the morning I was sitting with a mill man at my "coffee and cakes and two fried." We were enjoying the comic, where the man comes back from vacation, tells his secretary his desk is stacked high with work so he must not be disturbed—and, being just returned from the strain of vacation, goes to sleep in his chair.

"He's got it right at that," says my mill man—"but still, I'd like to have one oftener, all the same.

"Why, when you ask for a lay-off here you'd think they was goin' to have to shet the mill down and wait for ye to come back! But when they want to fire you it don't make no trouble with the mill a-tall. Last winter I wanted a week off, and they let out a turable holler about my bein' off a good deal. 'Yes,' I says (and he fairly yelled) 'I was off three weeks takin' care o' the sick, and now I want a week for a vacation from it.'"

"Only the salary men gets 'em with pay," he concluded. The tone of voice and his other comments make me feel

constantly surer that one of the best possible acknowledgments of a worker's term or excellence of service is a week or two of vacation with pay. In any event, the man is only a vacationist and not a Bolshevist.

"Yes, them's good tongs," said the "rougher" of the hot-mill crew next my cold rolls a few hours later. He is the one who starts the hot sheet bar into the big rolls to be received and handed back to him over the rolls by the "catcher" on the other side. "But we have to wear them out fast when we work on so many different sizes of iron. Why, you know" (and his face lighted) "there was a time when this place had the best tools, and give 'em the best attention o' any mill in the country. It was a pleasure! But now—well, the same feller keeps 'em, you see, and the mill has growed and he's overworked—he can't do it all and he don't seem to be given no help."

(Such talk, the fight over the company shovel at Stockton, and other things make me feel sure that manager chaps overlook a good chance in this matter of the worker's delight in his tools, though I know the detail of it, complicated by the worker who doesn't care, is mighty difficult.)

Usually such conversations continue with "Where did you work 'fore you come here? What could you make a day there? Did you like it better than here?"

Or else the talk runs about bosses—except that hot-mill rollers are pretty much their own bosses, apparently.

"When a man quits here he's asked why. If he says he don't like the company, they may fix it so it's hard for him to get a job here in the district. 'Course what he oughta say is he don't like the company's bosses, and that's the fact. Some of the guys bossin' right in this plant is *mean* ones, I'll say"—this from the breakfast man again.

A few hours later I found myself absorbed in a difficulty with a roller boss which lasted busily for hours and made it one of the hardest days yet.

I was helping him as any helper should, working hard to loosen the metal sheets and put them onto the skid, using the patented can-opener blade on my army knife to gain speed, and breaking it in the cause. For long runs all would go well, then perhaps my hand or his would slip, and once or twice he got a slight cut. Then he would look daggers at me or say something I couldn't understand; for this roller was a handsome Greek to whom I had been transferred. I couldn't say anything except "Sorry," and I wasn't sure he could understand that. But it made me indignant that for all my efforts to increase his earning power with my speed—lessening my own wages by getting through earlier and so stopping my pay—still he had nothing but a curse-look when there was a miscue. So for hours I fought with him—in a conversation entirely *mental.* Hardly a word passed between us—the noise makes it practically impossible at the distance of a few feet between us. But all the time I kept going over it all till it made me sore on nearly everything imaginable. Perhaps, with an effort, I'd finally ease off into some other line of more pleasant thinking, and then would make another miscue and again get a nasty look and exclamation from him, when off I'd go for another half-hour or hour of imaginary quarrelling, usually ending with my quitting and walking off the job—in my mind.

Finally, after one of his exclamations, I went in open wrath to the cold-roll boss and complained. He quieted me down by a friendly "Don't mind him—you're all right." And the Greek too began to smile in my direction occasionally. So finally I began to plan a get-together party in which I could explain my dislike of his tactics, but my willingness to work if treated right. It was hard because of the language trouble, but he got it all right.

"Look here," I said, "when you smile" (and I showed him, a little sourly, I fear) "—good—polu kala—all right,

then I work like devil. When you go so" (and I copied him at his worst)—"then, polu kaka—very bad—nothing doing —not with *me*. See?"

"Yes, I knowa," he smiled. "You see when sheets very short I want work hard, go fast, because no money for me. When sheets long—good money—we go easy. You all right."

So we worked happily ever afterward—but the work-day, unfortunately, was nearly over by that time.

If he could have given a few words of instruction, or if the language trouble could have permitted better understanding, the day's strain would have been easily twenty per cent less. I wonder how many hundreds of thousands of workers must constantly be in the very fix I was where *they* are foreigner and the boss is American, but where all that passes to the eye is the curse look and profanity, while inwardly the worker is going through the same mental quarrelling I did and with the same result—soreness on all his friends, on America, and the whole world. If so, it's a certainty he's accomplishing twenty per cent less for the company while at the same time causing twenty per cent more wear and tear on his own muscles and "mentals" than if good relations were in operation.

To-day another Greek "catcher" was boss over me on the other side of the rolls. Nothing but smiles—and easier work. The easiest, best day yet. Have joined a boarding-house circle which looks interesting.

Millvale,
Sunday, March 23.

My only promotion on this job to date has been from one side of the rolls to the other—from helping the roller to helping the catcher. That's not very much, though it is, I think, a bit easier, and is free from the fumes and smoke of the gas-jet which is turned on occasionally to control the contraction and expansion of the bottom roll for

getting even pressure across the cold sheet. Especially when the hot mills are closed down and the crane is able to fetch a fresh pile of sheets to roll as soon as one is finished, it makes your "spell" of rest in between jobs very short, and so sends you home tired enough after nine hours.

But the loaf from Saturday morning to Monday morning makes it all perfectly possible and very close to enjoyable. In fact, I think it would be positively enjoyable if I didn't have to carry around this other alias and personality of mine which makes me keep silent many times when I'd like to talk freely.

But, of course, if I were genuinely one of the workers I'd be doing more of the worrying that they do. This is mainly about the job—it does seem almost impossible to overestimate the all-importance of the job to the worker.

"By gad, them fellows on the hot mills is in hard luck," says one of my busy cold-rollers. "No work since Wednesday of this week, and now we come out Monday and they don't! That's tough!"

"Aw, but think of the money thay make when they're makin' it!" says another. "What's worryin' me is how long are *we* goin' to have work!"

Steady work is just about as important, it seems, as good day wages. It seems to be felt, also, that this steadiness of the job is often more subject to the management's good-will than good wages.

Listen to my neighbor at a long and crowded bar in a neighboring town. He happened to be an old machinist I'd seen in the mill.

"Yes, sir," said he, "I'm near seventy years old, and I've been in the steel line, one way or 'nother, forty-two of them —sheet floors mostly, I guess. I've made big money, too, but I never saved nothin' till just lately—now that my children are all well married and I hain't no bad habits to spend nothin' on 'cept my board and room—and that's less'n

ten dollars a week. Look here!" and he pulled out the receipts for four Liberty Bonds. "I've got enough insurance money to pay every cent o' puttin' me away in good style, and mebbe something left for the girls and boys to divide amongst 'em.

"Just two year I been here in the mill, and for a seventy-year-older I'm making pretty good money. The foreman!—*why—I wish't you could see the long hours he gives me*—an' pay-and-a-half for everything over eight hours! I tell you he's fine. Sometimes I work eighteen hours and take home money for, let's see, yes, that's right, twenty-three hours. Yes, sir, you're right, that's $9.86. And it's steady work, too.—And when one job gets too heavy for me he puts me on somethin' easier."

It's mainly that Saturday and Sunday rest which makes him like the boss for giving him long hours and therefore extra long pay, because he doesn't need the money so badly. After a week of soberly and sadly watching the real jobs slip past him, Saturday's dissipation at the bar helps him to think himself still in the game and going strong—stronger with every glass emptied.

"No, sir, I'm one steel man that ain't never chewed tobacco. And I ain't never cared for these here 'wild women' neither. But I do like to come here of a Saturday afternoon and take a little beer and mebbe a bit o' liquor. 'How much?' Oh, only enough to *make me feel as though I had my old position back like, you know.*"

"Now it's my turn, young fellow. What'll you have?—anything you like; I never tell a man what he's to take when I'm payin'—not me."

And then the job again:

"Now, you're a likely-lookin' fellow. You take my advice—allus take it as easy as ye can, but allus keep your eye out, and whenever the boss comes your way, work like the devil. Show him you're interested and he'll put you

on 'ketchin'' the first thing you know. That's good money. And say, don't fergit, you show interest in your work when the boss comes up. He's a good fellow and he'll see. And don't say I told you nothin'."

And that was his final word again—the summing up of his forty-two years of dealing with foremen!—as we parted.

On the job and off it, such men seem to have a lot more sense of honor than most people looking across the usual gulf of social and economic difference would judge. My old friend told at great length how he left his job of policeman in a city because he would not electioneer for his superior's candidate against an old personal friend.

Likewise a big wholesome and husky American, shovelling coal from a wagon onto a car on the station siding:

"Oh, I bring down four or five of these loads from that mine over yonder—and every one of 'em weighs about 6,200, too. But at that, it's better'n doin' what they wanted me to do in there"—and he pointed to the mill.

When he called it "dirty work" I thought of my own clothes at *Stackton*, and didn't blame him much for refusing, though shovelling coal all day didn't look very clean or attractive, either. But he didn't mean that kind of dirt.

"No, I was on the open-hearth when they asked me, and I told 'em I'd been one of the boys all my life, and money wouldn't make me go back on 'em.

"A little later," he went on, as he paused and straightened his back a moment, "I asked a big chap who came onto the floor what his job was, and when he said, 'Oh, not much o' anything'—I told him I knew what he was doin', and he called me a liar. But I backed up my proposition, and after we'd fought for thirty-five minutes he said he reckoned I was right. 'Course then he had to git out or the boys 'ud a mobbed him for sellin' 'em out that way— No, I reckon I'm better off here in the air, pretty much my own boss, than spyin' on my pals."

Like so many of the workers, he had seen many different kinds of labor: so many years a puddler—"hard, husky work, but it pays you good when it's goin'"—so many years in a coal-mine; "and in six or seven hours I c'ud get out enough coal to satisfy me, five or six dollars before the war, as much as ten or twelve dollars now, and loaf around home the rest of the day," etc. Some regrets he had that he had not kept at this or that work longer, or taken this or that chance, but on the whole he seemed pretty well satisfied with life.

A lot of workers must find good, steady work here and stay by it or there could not be so many streets of simple but well-kept houses and yards. Certainly there is a big help, too, in the closer acquaintance between the managers and the men which is made possible by the smallness of the town.

"Oh, we're not worryin'," said a roller to-day. "We'll soon be at work again. The boss called us in the other day and told us all just why it was our gang had to be off. It's all right."

Not everybody is as enthusiastic as my sixty-five-year friend over the company bosses, but as far as I can see there is general agreement that the company pays good wages, gives steady work on a very decent schedule of hours, and keeps just about the cleanest plant in the whole industry. The workers seem to know little about the managers, and the higher-ups seem a long way off with their headquarters in another city. But at that, the distance between capital and labor is enormously less than at Stockton. If the Bolshevists ever get a hearing here they'll have to use a lot of gas-bombs first.

With my Saturday-Sunday "spell" nearly gone—and it included a climb up one of the big hills and a stretch with a book on the grass in the spring sun—it is genuinely pleasant to think of a hot breakfast with Mrs. B. to-morrow

at five-thirty, and then, with her appetizing handiwork in my dinner-bucket, "ring in" for the day's work. The only trouble is that with the crane man so active in bringing us fresh iron to roll it is hard to get time to empty that bucket. We have no lunch hour. Here's what the good soul puts into it:

Four bread-and-butter sandwiches,
Dish of meat,
Glass of jelly,
Glass of preserves,
An orange, an apple, three or four cookies,
Two pieces of pie,
One or two pieces of cake,
And pint of coffee.

There's a big chance here for some one to organize a trust of boarding-house keepers so they can stand their ground as they do in the average college town. Barring that, I may be fat if my landlady, at one dollar per day, continues to give me such a bucket every day, and then at supper sets a groaning table and stands over it urging and re-urging her good food on her boarders!

Same Place,
Thursday, March 27.

In spite of the nasty snow and rain here I've been having a most luxurious and enjoyable day—I've been my own boss in charge of a grand and glorious lay-off.

And part of the day I've been trying to figure out just why it happened. Perhaps it was the heat and mugginess of the weather—the mill was certainly hot and unusually smoky. Probably it was that, together with the Greek roller boss's desire to make a big run and a big bonus, combined, still further with the fact that for long periods the heavy sheets had to be lifted off the runway and then up high onto the top of the pile; ordinarily the crane takes the pile away before it gets so high. Then, too, it happened

several times that just as the catcher and I were gritting our teeth in the attempt to finish the high pile without calling for a "spell," the roller would send them through too fast and make a mess on the floor, or else, just at that moment, Jo, the boss, would happen by and proceed to tell us to lift them higher and toss them further back onto the pile!

Anyway, by noon the helper, a young returned soldier, and I were "all in"—also very cross at everything and everybody. As a result, I'm pretty sure, of my temper as much as my tiredness, every movement during the afternoon went hard—I spent it mostly quarrelling mentally to myself with nobody in particular, but with all the bosses and management in general—particularly for their paying roller and catcher on the amount of work done while we helpers got no reward whatever for our extra effort, except shorter time and therefore less money, by reason of getting that much sooner to the place where the roller and catcher, after figuring their earnings, decided they had done enough for the day.

Finally I thought the occasion might help get me a different job with less work or more money or more interest. So when at last we were through for the day I said to the biggest boss I could find: "I guess I'd better have either a new job or a lay-off to-morrow. I've got a 'mad on' against that Greek and everything else."

To my surprise he didn't smile as usual, but showed his teeth and told me I'd better go look for somethin' else if I thought I could find it. He, too, seemed sore on things, so I compromised by saying I'd feel better, mebbe, if he'd give me a turn's lay-off. I guess many foremen would have fired me on the spot. In any case I think he was feeling just as nasty as I was; he had had a very hot, busy day, too; so we both had the makin's of trouble and a bust-up.

There surely is a mighty connection between tiredness and

temper everywhere. It figures, of course, most of all where men are paid for doing hard physical work. I almost think I could catch with a stop-watch the moment when the work produces such a soreness of muscle that it induces a soreness of mind, which then proceeds to make me think about this or that unfairness between me and the bosses and the company. Just as they say bad teeth spread infection to the body's unhealthy or weak spots, so the physical poison of fatigue seems to infect, in a short while, the feelings and the thinkings if there is in them any little raw or sore spot.

A sort of "reverse English" confirmation of this came to-day when I was telling of my temper at the boarding-house. The landlord was a hot-mill man for a number of years.

"The next time you get that way," he advised, "you go out and see how far you can jump or how high. And a few minutes later you'll come back without your grouch."

"That's right," said a handsome young heater on the hot mills. "Often when our crew gets sore at everything —the iron's bad or somethin'—we try to see who's the best at jumpin' over one of them safety gates, and pretty soon we've forgotten all about our troubles."

If I weren't so anxious to find the big thing which I'm sure is at the bottom of this combination of muscular weariness and mental irritability, I would not be willing to confess here that when I came home from the plant, and for several hours after, the question was whether I should curse or cry—and, like the big football half-backs I've seen exhausted after a losing game, I ended by doing a shameful amount of both!

There's surely something wrong when men come out of a day's work like that, and there's no doubt others do it besides myself. A man in that mood isn't anxious to do straight thinking about capital and labor—he's too far

gone for that; but he does want to feel sore at all bosses and capitalists and managers, and such like.

The more I see of the foreman the more I feel he's a very complex proposition. It almost looks to me as though he can never be expected to help do the job of solving the factory manager-man problem unless he's given an entirely new deal.

There's my roller boss, the Greek, a sort of unit boss in charge of our quartet. He works hard to get his tonnage money; his two weeks' pay yesterday was $138. If he could express himself well and didn't have to depend on dagger looks to show what *not* to do, he wouldn't be bad. Evidently they can't find Americans for his job. But then Jo seldom smiles at him in telling him about the roll screws which control the pressure, and very often yells and swears. So the Greek rides us just as he is ridden by his boss. Jo, in turn, is old and just about the hardest-worked person I ever saw—unless it is *his* boss, the department superintendent, Jack, who keeps sharp after Jo, besides having many miles to walk and look after, up and down the length of the quarter-mile building. He is helped by Shorty and another, both of whom run a great deal and are very nervous and worried-looking.

As I see them all inspect our sheets, I find myself saying: "Somebody's riding these bosses. Somebody's riding these bosses." Still the men who are over these are apparently friendly—they were very fine to me when I asked to get a chance on the hot mills. Maybe it's heavy responsibility with small salaries, or trouble getting thoughtful workers—a big lot of sheets came back rejected last week—but *something* is riding these bosses, I'm sure, and has been for years.

That being the case, it isn't fair to expect them to be sweet-tempered and full of careful instruction for safety (day before yesterday, on the morning turn, one leg and two toes were broken, and four fingers cut off for three

men!) on rolling or anything else. And still everybody says, "Go to your foreman," when you want an advance or a change of job, or a lay-off. Just because he has your whole well-being in his hands—he can fire or freeze-out or promote you, so you could sure enough sing to him, "I need thee, every hour I need thee"—you don't like to take a chance of spoiling your stand-in by asking him about this or that when he's busy and worried, especially considering the fact that when the day's been hard on you it's probably been the same on him, as yesterday, when I lost my carefully cultivated stand-in with my friend.

The foreman is everything to the worker, all right, but it doesn't fix matters any for the worker if the manager says, "Speak to your foreman about that," and then turns around and rides him down too hard.

"Alla time 'hurry-up, hurry-up, hurry-up'—*no good!*" said my Greek "catcher" the other day, with a grimace as we walked out together, both very tired. He has to "hurry-up, hurry-up" me because the roller hurry-ups *him*, because Jo hurry-ups *him*, because Shorty hurry-ups *him*, because Jack shakes his head and makes a wry face as he looks at the sheets and hurry-up-hurry-ups *him*. Who or what does it to Shorty and Jack I don't know, but it's something or somebody, and it looks to me as though all of us from Jack down are doing the best we can, though I'm mighty sure that nobody is very happy about it.

Anyway it's certain that to-morrow's sheets will go better for to-day's rest, unless Jack's still sore at me. "Aunty B" at the boarding-house was shocked at my taking the liberty of a lay-off on my four dollars a day. Her star boarder said:

"I've only had two days off in a year except Sunday—and I made them up by overtime."

But he's a boiler-fixer and practically has no boss. Maybe, by the way, that's the reason so many on all sides speak

enthusiastically of coal-mining—"You go down and get your coal and when you've got it you're through and nobody to say nothin' to you."

To-morrow—Friday—it's work from six till three or four, and then again from midnight to eight or nine Saturday morning. That's because Saturday is given to the changing of the rolls in order that their imperfections can be taken out in the big lathes.

I wish I could go out in our shop back home and see if our foremen look as though they were happy; if they aren't it's pretty sure nobody else is.

Millvale,
Wednesday, April 2.

Several of my friends at the mill tell me of their promotion from helper to catcher or roller with tonnage pay after only a few days' work. I am sorry to report that after all these weeks I am still only a helper, earning about four dollars. In order to get more experience I have gone to the employment department and then on their direction to various department foremen asking to be taken on, but am told by all that they are either unable to use those they have, or are hiring men in the company's plants in near-by towns now shut down.

"As soon as it gets hot a lot of the boys will go back to the farm, and then I'll take you to the hot mills—'bout a month from now," say the sheet-floor bosses.

Meanwhile I've met many workers and "helped" with a variety of catchers and rollers. Once in the same turn I was so changed around that I worked at different rolls under two Greeks, one Italian, and one Spaniard—all pretty good fellows except mine enemy the Greek. (Of course it should be mentioned that red-haired Irish Jo is over them all!) Just now I am regularly under another Greek roller, Matthew, with an American boy, Arthur, as catcher, and an Italian as the other helper.

In learning the ways of all these, two points stand out. One is how quickly a man's personality is shown in the way he gets another man to work with him. My Italian roller, Tony, was able by his smiles at the right moment to get my wish to perform up to the hilt—with, later, somewhat of a disappointment to find that he was lazy and expected little of himself or his helpers. My present Greek knows less English than my first one, but he is jolly; he also takes time off to rest occasionally, so that our quartet is a happy one which puts almost as many sheets through the rolls with enormously less wear and tear on muscles and "mentals" and rolls.

The other point is how much the wear and tear depend on *mental* conditions and attitudes. For instance, my first day with Tony I was unhappy to feel that he did not like my way of loosening the sheets for him, and yet he could not make clear his wishes. Finally, the catcher's helper asked to trade places so *he* could show me. In a few minutes Tony asked me to come back and showed that he was well pleased with *my* way. His approval changed the work at once from laborious to easy. Then a few hours later it became a wearing chore again to go and help my original Greek, who never smiled approval, looked dirks at every pause and cursed me roundly when in open defiance to him I finally mutinied and loafed for one "spell" of not more than fifteen seconds—while all the rest of the crew looked at me! When the mind goes over and over the sore spots of such bad handling, reflecting all the while on the company's cutting off the helper from sharing in bonus, even a few hours of effort is almost as ruinous as a machine's running without oil—*unless* the worker, in order to spare himself this friction, schools himself to the I-don't-give-a-hang state of mind. And that is the state of mind which for many workers has become chronic, and which offers stony ground for the seed of ambition of good workmanship—or anything else than Bolshevistic new deals.

If the worker doesn't protect himself in this don't-care way, and so works with an unhappy mind for long hours, his mind becomes stony anyway with fatigue. Last week I noticed that the roll-turner's helper looked "all in." He is a returned soldier and was badly gassed. He assured me that there will be a Bolshevik uprising in this country! "Why, they's 10,000 soldiers on the streets of New York every day, and no jobs for 'em. 'Taint right!"

This week he told me of the long turns of eighteen and twenty hours he'd had to work last week because somebody had had the flu. He had caught up his sleep. Bolshevism didn't seem to interest him. To him the country seemed saved!

My sixty-five-year-old friend and also "Uncle Zeke" of about the same years, have both been complaining of their overtime, though some of my younger friends on a near-by furnace tell me, with evident pride, of their "fifty-two cents an hour, twelve hours work and pay for fourteen." To the eight-hour hot-mill men these long hours in such as the open-hearth appear very disgusting—as they are also, I'm told, to the young wives with which the town is said to be filled. It seems that the young husky chaps of the neighborhood can very early earn good money (six dollars to ten dollars per day, and up) on either the hot mills or the furnaces, and so marry very young girls—with divorces frequently resulting.

Such high wages for hard work evidently discourage "higher education." Arthur, my catcher, is eighteen, and because he's on tonnage he makes eight or nine dollars a day.

"Aw, I was playin' hookey or goin' fishin', or somethin', ten days out of twenty, so my family said I'd better quit with first year high school. The only study I ever enjoyed was history— An' I'm goin' up to B—— to see my queen next month if I can make it!"

When I asked whether it didn't look as though a fellow

got on better if he took all the schooling he could, his comeback put me away down and out, and brought the talk to a quick stop:

"I should say not! And you prove it. Your language shows you've had more education than *I*, but just look at your job and look at *mine!* I'd say you ain't no argument for education!"

All his bearing speaks of satisfied superiority to the riff-raff earning less than he. Furthermore, it seems that his dignity as an eight-dollar man rather frowns upon his working too hard and making too much; that would apparently show him greedy and tight-fisted—would hurt his reputation as a good fellow. He takes pains to tell us how his roller's appetite for money would work us all to death if he himself didn't insist on moderation in earning and working:

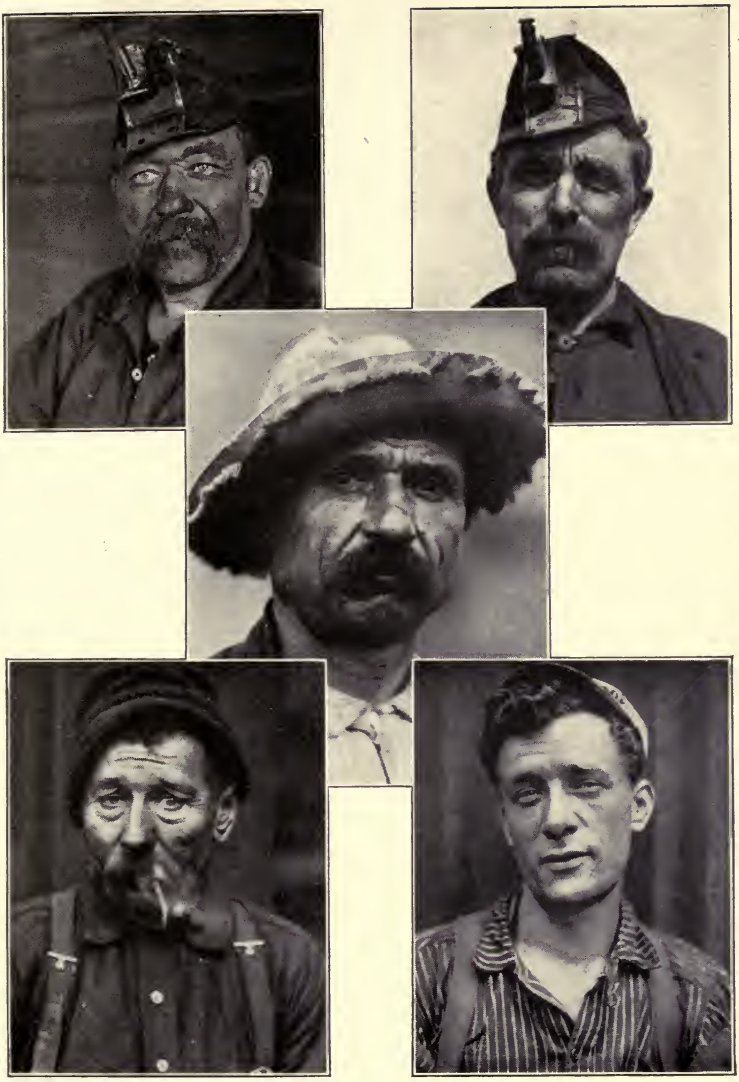
"I like work and I'm not afraid of it, but I ain't goin' to be none of your hogs for it!"

With him and many of the other rollers my strenuous Greek is very unpopular—though not with his foreman who is interested in production—for pushing himself and his crew so hard for his $138 per fortnight. It is possible that this willingness of the Greek to "hog" work in spite of unpopularity is behind the opinion of a group of Americans warming themselves around the salamander this morning:

"Yessir, the company is always lettin' good Americans go—men who have been here fifteen or twenty years—and holding these —— Greeks. No wonder there's hundreds of 'em here."

"Tired?" said Matthew, my Greek roller, to-day as we came out together. (He got $131 last pay.) "Yes, *every day tired.* But next month I go to old country for stay mebbe all time."

Arthur's father has been a boss roller for many years, and probably earns a net total of $3,500 or $4,000 yearly. There



From photographs by Lewis W. Hine

SOME TYPES FROM THE COAL AND STEEL TOWNS

are many fathers and sons here at work. According to that, this town and the mill with its above-average conditions of work, may not be in line with the situation mentioned recently by an authority:

"It has been noticed that the personnel in the steel-mills is falling off."

That remark was called out, I think, by my saying that from my experience with foremen at Stackton, a young American could hardly hope to start at the bottom and work up into practical steel-making successfully until the public made it possible for him to understand and make a hit with his bosses by teaching Slavic in the public schools!

It's nearly nine—an hour past bedtime on an eight-hour sleep schedule. It's up at four these days, in the plant and at work at five, out again at three or, possibly, two—and to-morrow, being Friday, back to the mill again at midnight.

Well, at least going to bed is a little simpler than at home. After helping to catch and pile somewhere around thirty tons of steel sheets every day—fifteen or twenty pounds at a time—it doesn't seem necessary to devote five minutes to bedroom exercises!

Millvale,
Thursday, April 10.

It must be a sign of a good plant when a man who quits makes even a mild sensation. It seemed as though I was making that this morning when, in my street clothes, I saw my friends on my way to the boss for the "quit slip" required for getting my "time" this afternoon.

I felt sorry to have to answer the surprised queries of my policeman and other friends with a lie:

"Well, you see, if I'm goin' to get on, I gotta get both coin and experience. And I can't see neither one in bein' four weeks on a helper's job at four dollars per! I ain't kickin' on the treatment, y' understand—you're all fine.

But I gotta beat it—first over to X——, and if there's nothing there, down to M—— or B——."

A pair of journeymen roll-turner friends at the boarding-house advised:

"If you go to any mills where there's a sign of a union don't ever mention these boys if you want a job a-tall. . . . Well, because they say these chaps here won't join 'em."

But after four weeks with them I'm sure it's because the "boys" here are treated too well to care to bother about fighting for more. Certainly they are all enormously happier than at Stackton.

One reason is that the hot-mill men—the most numerous and most capable of all the several thousand workers—work only eight hours and, by means of piece rates which include all the crew, earn good money in what look like jolly and contented gangs. The cold-rollers and catchers make good money with seldom more than ten hours. The annealers and open-hearthers seem to work twelve hours. I'm sorry my best efforts failed to get me a job there to see if they feel as much and give as little as at Stackton. At any rate, I have noticed that the men in charge of these departments are spoken of very highly.

Another reason for their fair contentment is steady work.

"No like-a at ——" (one of the town's other big plants), says one Italian. "Some-a time work—too mooch-a time no work. No goo-d. Here alla time job."

"Me here sixteen year—in dees plant. Good-a place," says another, one of the several Italian families who have been here a long time, and seem to have some very good jobs. One of them, of the second generation, says he could sell, on the side, a hundred tickets back to Italy, but is allotted only one or two berths on each boat.

"Since the company joined a merger," said a husky

hot-mill heater, "they ain't so good as they used to be, but they're still pretty blamed good in spreading what work they is around so that everybody gets his share and no hoggin'. Just now our furnace is laid off so that you cold-rollers can get out more stuff. They's already so many on the extra list that it means a lay-off for our crew. So I went to work with a carpenter friend this morning for a while."

Another reason is the attractive condition of the plant as mentioned. Sweepers (forty-six cents per hour for twelve hours) are always in sight. They are almost troublesome in the way they insist on picking up sticks you had counted on using as props for your piles of sheets. Painters are fixing pipes, furnace fronts, benches, etc., "for the annual inspection of the big fellows from the head offices," as my heater friend put it. Shrubbery and grass are in evidence in every possible place.

"W'y, when we has visitors," said "Uncle Zeke," "course we allus brings 'em down to see the plant, and they all tell us they never seen no such plant as this nowhures. Makes us fellows proud to be here, I tell ye."

Certainly the close relations with the foremen favored by the small town are also a big factor for general contentment. No worker seemed to know the present group of general manager and other higher-ups, who are apparently changed rather over-rapidly. But everybody, apparently, could, either as a fellow-worker or a fellow-citizen, soon get on to friendly terms with the bosses—interfered with only by the overworked condition of at least the cold-roll bosses.

"When I decided it was up to me to cut out the khaki and get busy," said one of my buddies, "I 'phoned Jack at his house. As soon as I mentioned 'returned soldier' he told me to come down in the morning. My father's been a roller here many years."

The restaurant is clean, well served and managed, though not used a great deal—"too much money to tie up in tickets," some said.

The Relief Association gives different weekly benefits for different payments, with a big death benefit following a fifty-cent monthly assessment.

Many had bought company stock and regularly asked each other, "How is she to-day?" like millionaires, though the amount held seemed, usually, extremely small.

Few unions probably can offer conditions much better than these. The disadvantages I observed would probably not be noticed much by unions.

The first of these is the discontent general among us cold-roll helpers because we do not share bonus. The idea that our rollers and catchers will supply us with all the incentive required hardly works out. It simply makes us hope that they will somehow stub their toes or cut their fingers! The more they nick the rolls, and so require short lay-offs while the polishers restore them, the better we helpers like it. (These great steel rolls, weighing around a ton each, are of so sensitive a surface that the old roller says a hair laid on a sheet as it goes through will show a slight indentation on both the sheet and the roll!)

"You helpers are supposed to work your heads off, and so get the place of the first roller or catcher who drops out," explained one foreman.

"Do you want to know how to get your roller's or catcher's job?" asked an old retired roller at the boarding-house. "Why, just knock his block off and send him to the hospital—then they'll give you his job. That's the only way—unless you can sweat for a few years."

"It just ain't fair," said an old helper working next to me. "The other day my roller worked me so that he absolutely cheated me out of at least one hour's work—at time and a half, that's sixty-three cents."

The plant's other weak spot seems to me the way the management refers you constantly to your boss:

"Ask your boss about transferring you to another job—or correcting your time-card," etc., etc.

The trouble with that is that he is just the last man in the world you want to discuss *questionable* matters with. If you get his ill-will, you might as well go jump in the river as expect to get farther in your work. Furthermore, he is so busy that what appears to you a perfectly simple statement may chance to appear the exact reverse to him. In the nature of the case he is pretty sure to be touchy, especially when overworked. You, accordingly, occupy your mind for hours deciding whether to risk your prospects for the future by bothering him about anything. If you are wise you pretty surely decide not to do it; whereupon you continue to be chafed by this or that obvious ill-adjustment up to the moment when you either get disgusted and quit, or curse yourself into the "don't-give-a-hang" state of mind. So far as efficiency for the company is concerned, one is about as bad as the other.

Most of the foremen have been for long years regular workers. They apparently believe in "mystery." All of us agree that they "wouldn't none of 'em tell a fella nothin' even when you asked 'em." Even the rollers learned only what *not* to do by a certain number of call-downs. The "why" of anything they did not know.

"Whenever one of 'em comes to me I say, 'Yes, sir; no, sir; no, sir; yes, sir,' as if they know everything and I didn't know nothin'. They like that. When they go away I do as I would-a done anyway," said one catcher.

His boast was that he knew how to circumvent foremen —and women—and had many accounts in detail of his successes with both. His one failure with the former was when a foreman who had hired a man asked him to fire him. He refused, and was himself fired on the spot.

The day before leaving I wandered over into the finishing department to see what they did to our sheets. The young inspector took delight in showing how little defects played hob. I feel sure it would have greatly increased my value if I could have been shown these processes before I began helping. That would probably have had the opposition of the bosses whose "mystery" would thus be lessened. But such instruction would certainly save some of the money now required to have a boss on hand every minute to prevent mistakes, besides increasing the dignity and attractiveness of the cold-roll work and possibilities. (When a policeman found me in the finishing department he politely but firmly told me to "Beat it! Against the rules.") I guess I was ignorant, but I hadn't known until then that a bad sheet meant a cracked spot of paint on somebody's auto's doors or sides.

As to the town: The schools certainly do not sell their wares well, though I confess they have stiff competition when an untaught eighteen-year-older can become a catcher at eight dollars. The town morals are certainly bad unless most of the men I meet are tall liars. This is partly because of the usual small-town lack of intellectual interests. Another reason is the cloud under which intellectual interests must live where so little education is required for good wages. Another factor is the large number of very young married women (also one result of the above) who have little or nothing to interest them during the long hours of their husbands' work, many of whom must come home, I'm sure, too tired to be satisfactory husbands or good fathers. Another factor, I'm inclined to think, is the absence of the opportunity to find a satisfactory sense of manliness and personal worth-whileness through the solving of the real problems and the overcoming of man-sized obstacles in the factory work. These satisfactions seem

jealously reserved for the foremen. But more of that at some other time.

In some ways I'm sorry to have got "my time" and packed my grip for the close of "Episode II." The work has been immensely more enjoyable than that of "Episode I." Perhaps I would have found similar conditions if I had gotten a job on the open-hearth again, but I think not. Even the foreign workers seem mostly to have been here a long time, and to have adjusted themselves in better relations all around.

After about nine weeks of it I have grown a little more used to carrying a different name and status. The lonesomeness of this is something hard to bear, though very difficult to describe. My story of unsuccessful selling and other "head" work seems to find no doubters. In fact, I am so easily accepted as a perfectly proper four-dollar a day man that it greatly hurts my pride. Yesterday, at last, I did have the satisfaction of finding one man who saw through my disguise. He was drunk!

I was waiting in the shoe-shop while the repairer was giving me an additional pair of soles, when a local merchant walked in, in the midst of one of his occasional two weeks' sprees. He transfixed me with his eye:

"Say, stranger, I have never seen you before, but I'd like to tell you about yourself. Now as to brains you'd stand, I'd say, so and so here. As to education, so and so; salesmanship, etc."—giving me what I hope was a very good character-reading.

When I asked him where he "got the stuff," referring to the source of his intuition only, he stood up straight and said with pride: "For five years, sir, I was a bartender."

"Now," he continued, "there's something wrong here. It's perfectly evident to me, young fellow, that either you have committed some serious crime and are at this moment

a fugitive from justice, or else you are the sad victim of some deep, disgraceful, secret sin—or you'd not be working in this —— town at four dollars a day!

"But"—after a pause—"in spite of that crime or that secret sin o' yours, whatever it is, I'll lend you whatever money you need and, furthermore, I'll offer you fifty dollars a week and commission to canvass this town for my goods."

I felt that my self-respect had at last been vindicated, though I was sorry it required the "in vino veritas" genius of the grape to do it.

CHAPTER IV

"STEEL STILL SLOW—MINERS WANTED"

THE unskilled jobs in the district's steel-mills still seemed closed and surrounded with applicants. Getting inside with the help of a letter of introduction would have been easily possible, but would probably have lessened the value of the contacts with the men. Such a letter, however, seemed practical as well as necessary for entering the strange field of the coal-miner, in the hope that it might give light on the matter of the foremen, the shorter day, living conditions, etc. Before the letter could operate, however, a few days had to be given to loafing and listening.

Steelville,
April 22.

The rebuffs expected from my rough clothes when I started out on my adventure in January haven't arrived yet. Latterly it has not seemed necessary to appear quite so rough, but people still seem to be more willing to tell me about themselves than I used to find them.

Nicola, an Italian, beckoned me over to his seat in the smoker to tell me about his fourteen years of coal-mining:

"Yes, coal-mine fine place to work—een *Ohio:* bad in Eeleenois. Too much-a gas in Eeleenois—and too much-a accident there. My leg he crush and break— No, never no monee for heem—I do no read-a da English, and no sign-a da paper—get no monee. Here in C—— seex Italian families we work-a da mine—t'ree feet seam—alla time bend but alla time so much-a coal so much-a monee. Alla time no hot no cold. But I t'ink coal man feefty year he look seexty—cheek alla time white—too littla sun."

He had definite ideas about personal liberty, as set forth after his pint bottle had been offered—and perforce of friendship accepted. As we came into a smoky town he exclaimed:

"Oh, smokee! Dees good-a town for poor peopla. No smoke?—no work for poor peopla and no monee. Too littla smoke in Eetalee—no good for poor man. But I get passaport to-day for go back and see my family near Udine."

George, a husky but wholesome-looking workman also on the smoker:

"Well, I was eighteen and had no trade in a little Iowa town, so I joined the navy. Here's my certificate—'First-class electrician.' See? And in those four years I saw almost the whole world. You bet it takes the juice to run a cruiser—a big generator to turn every turret besides all the other things. Now I get good money, eight-hour day and interesting work. . . .

"Oh, yes, you start in with a little tattooing on your hand or wrist, and before you get back you're pretty well covered. Course it hurts! Yes, you can prick it out if you like. I know one fellow, every time he smoked a cigar or cigarette he'd touch his tattooing with it. Course even then he'll show a white scar of the same design where he's burnt out the Chinese ink."

Thomas, colored, on one of the bridges:

"Well, the company always done treated me all right. I been there fo'ah yeahs. Wi'ah (wire) workah now and make ma' ten dollars every turn—just now we're wo'kin' only fo'ah turn a week. That ain't bad when so many men out o' wo'k everywheah. . . . Shuah, it's dangerous when them wires gets loose and flyin' around, but I ain't never been hurt yet. S' better'n bein' a sailor—den you gotta spend all you makes when you gets on shore after a long cruise—'tain't possible to hold back nohow. Seems lak yo just gotta even up, somehow. . . . Yes, I had a wife, but

she got away from me. I reckon to get another 'foh long —seein's how I got a thousand-dollar bond. . . . Shuah, you can get on, mebbe as labor—and if you watch sharp they'll mebbe give you a chance at drawin' wi'ah. I'll be right glad to see you—yes, the —— Works. So long."

Elizabeth, in the information-booth at the railway station: "Polite? Well, I'll tell the world people ain't polite to us girls! No, we never get any thanks, and lotsa time they tell us, 'Well it was five-ten and not five-fifteen yesterday, 'cause I looked at my watch.' And all the fool things they expect us to know and get sore if we don't! (Yes, sir, one at five-forty and another at five-fifty-five.) We get some training inside answering the 'phone. (Blankburg?—track 4, madam.) Oh, I've wanted to hang up on 'em many's the time."

Pearl interrupted here to say that she's taking tonic for her frazzled nerves, but all she got for her pains was Elizabeth's "Aw, you get out! Your nerves are as good as mine, and I can keep this up a long time yet. (Next train to Beeville? Seven-fourteen, sir.)"

So it goes. They all seem glad to find any one interested in their work—just as if they were editors or college professors or captains of industry or snake-charmers—for all of those are delighted, I know from experience, to talk to anybody about their jobs.

Steelville, April 27.

To my surprise the British prison-ship, *Success*, anchored in the river, and helping to recruit for the marines, gave some side-lights on the labor and general social situation. From about 1802 to 1850 it carried criminals from England to Australia. With its wire-wrapped cat-o'-nine-tails, its salt-water bathtub where the prisoner had to wash his flayed back and often took the opportunity to drown himself, its "black hole," its "tiger cage" for crazy ones, and

its various instruments for confining chins and heads and wrists while the boat's tossings wrenched flesh and bone, it must have been well called the floating hell. The first two years of every sentence was spent below the water-line with thirty-five pound leg-chains in "solitary," with one hour's exercise dragging an enormous iron ball. After that, the other years—during the later career of the boat—were spent by the prisoner working by day in the quarries ashore and sleeping on board.

This boat carried the famous Dorsetshire farmers, who are credited with calling the first English strike in 1834. (Moses, it is understood, was the leader of the first strike and walk-out in history.) These men were a half-dozen farm laborers at seven shillings the week. They asked for eight. For their pains they were cut to six. They went before a judge with the protest that they could not live. He spoke thus:

"Not for what you have done, but for what may come after you and your example, and that those in authority may be obeyed, I sentence each of you to be transported for seven years of penal servitude!"

That was only eighty-five years ago.

No wonder our present law restricts the judge from using his own judgment as to the kind of punishment he will choose.

I'm told we had labor troubles here a great deal earlier.

Another case was Captain Melville, a mischievous lad who took a tuppenny tart off a baker's cart and was sent off on the *Success* for seven years! At the end of them he was an embittered and confirmed criminal. He committed scores of murders, and finally killed himself in his cell after twenty-nine efforts at escape.

There may be something of a hang-over memory of this sort of thing even in our Anglo-Saxon minds, and certainly an enormously nearer memory of it in the Russian mind.

At the meeting of Socialist-Bolsheviki Sunday afternoon, the chief speaker, Ruthenberg, of Cleveland, argued in regard to it:

"How mistaken are our capitalistic friends if they think that hard prison walls will soften our belief in a better chance for everybody! Every month I was in jail made my convictions harder and my whole soul bitterer. Now I can hope for nothing better than that great numbers of us might be imprisoned; that would give us an army which would want nothing better than to fight to the last drop for our beliefs in another system of society."

His audience of about a thousand was mainly of Russian "intellectuals"—young fellows with pompadours and heavy-rimmed glasses—crude-looking young Russian Jews and a number of industrial under dogs of various nationalities. The sad-eyed chap next to me was a bartender. Although they applauded vociferously all the appeals for protesting against the imprisonment of Debs and for inaugurating immediately the Soviets here, still there seemed, somehow, to be a lack of seriousness in the meeting. For instance, they were a little too ready to laugh at the interruptions of a drunken Scotch-Irishman.

While Ruthenberg made a pretty good speech, still everybody seemed to feel that a lot of hard work had to be done to awaken the worker to his opportunity. Somehow the machinery of the meeting and of the whole revolutionary programme seemed to creak and squeak. Said the organizer:

"Now's the time, comrades! Thousands of men are out of work. We must get them interested before they get busy again. *Now* their minds are open. We have asked you all to send in lists of prospects—especially those out of work; *but, comrades, only a few of you have sent in those lists!* Please do so at once."

And Ruthenberg: "After I got out of jail we leaders in Cleveland discussed what could we do to make *now* the

supreme effort to attack the capitalistic slavery around us. We decided to ask every member for one dollar. And I want to report that we now have 1,000 new members and $5,000 in the treasury!"

A pretty small mouse for the mountain of Socialism to labor and bring forth in an attempt to persuade the American working man that the League of Nations should be overthrown and local Soviets put in its place!

Nothing but dollars was asked for in the collection, but nickels certainly had the best of it in the tin pan which passed me. I saw four people buy "a dollar's worth of Trotzky's and other literature for seventy-five cents."

Almost with tears in their eyes and voices. Jewish "barkers" urged one and all to "don't forget next Sunday's meeting—last of the season. Be sure to bring your friends and fill the house."

At the employment offices—State and private—lots of jobs, skilled and unskilled, were open—miners, machinists, carpenters, plumbers, etc.

> "100 Railroad Laborers at once. New camp. Good cooking. *Only men with baggage taken.* Shipment Monday noon"

said one window. The "baggage test" for respectability and stability is often got around, they say, by men who put rocks into the cheapest of suitcases.

Only the steel business seems slow. But in steel or coal, somehow, I'll hope to find a place shortly. Meanwhile a dirty, dreary, stag hotel at one dollar and fifty cents—formerly about fifty cents, probably—makes any unoccupied moment hang heavy, and draws one onto the streets. At all times, however, these play on every note in the scale of American present-day life; from the broken-down man of sixty, wearing often the suit of a messenger-boy and the expression of a one-time fighter who knows he's beaten

(and Foch says no army's beaten until it knows it), down to the happy and swift black lad, who slides through the crowds on his one skate, with his piccaninny brother sitting comfortably on the skated foot, clasping his big brother's leg with one hand and holding with the other the cookie to his mouth, enjoying his ride immensely.

"I'll tell the world" it's an interesting place.

Steelville,
April 28.

In between times my meals here bring a chance to talk with the waitress about her job—which means life as she sees it through her job—or, perhaps, vice versa.

Gertrude—that is, Gertie—is tall and looks very strong, altogether considerable of a person for her twenty-one years. She is perfectly willing to show how complex her affairs are:

"Oh, about nine hours a day. And say, I'm all in every night. And lately, the minute I lie down I cough for two or three hours before I get to sleep. . . . Oh, I'll let it go until it gets worse—I always do. . . . Why, *these* heels ain't high at all. You see, I've got an awful bad corn, and these old shoes are comfortable. Gee, they nearly let my toes out on the floor. . . . She? Oh, she *says* she don't mind them high heels a-tall. (Good even'n. . . . Where *you* been? Oh, I've been right here on the job. What is it to-night? . . . Yes, sir. All right, in a minute.)

"Well, of course, the regular pay is seven dollars a week, but it's the tips that make it a job—about three dollars a day now. Where I was before, they was four to six dollars on the night turn. You see, there I had my same tables regular, and my friends come in and ask for me. (Worcestershire sauce? Just a minute, ma'am.)

"Oh, I been makin' my living a long time—ever since I ran away from home in Chicago, when I was fourteen. I

get on fine with my mother and everybody at home but my father—he and I, we don't make it. They don't know I married a soldier three years ago—goin' to tell 'em when he gets back next month. Naw, the soldier's wife's allowance don't help much unless you help it out yourself. (Is that all?—let's see, that's seventy-five.) . . . I guess you're right, I *have* been lookin' at the clock a good deal. Well, you see, he's waitin' outside for me. . . . I mean my 'Sweet Potato.'"

In the little shop Rachel, a homely but bright-eyed and interesting girl, did all the honors. In her childish voice, which seemed somehow to carry the memory of weary young years, she thanked her stars that she wasn't quite as small as the dapper and very fresh young dwarf who told his tougher companion as they went out that the next time he came back he'd "take a certain red-haired young lady out to a movie." Her weariness of voice did not prevent a very appealing smile.

"Well, of course, I don't remember nothin' hardly of it 'cause we left Russia when I was eight—that's twelve years ago. But it's such a terrible place. God, but they're mean to us Jews—no schools, no nothing. And now it's worse. My mother she ain't had no word from her brothers and sisters in four years—*nothing*. We try to send money—but no word ever comes. We think they're all dead. What a country!

"Only a few months of night school here—that's all. I had to work—you know, in private families, scrubbin' and cleanin' up, mostly. But the dollar and fifty cents I got helped me to buy clothes, and my father he got only about seven dollars a week then. Then I worked in a factory. Five years I been here. Yes, it's much better, and I learn the business—the boss he trusts me in everything. Yes, my father he saves money—enough that he could buy a store, but he's afraid he lose it all. So now he clerks in a nice furniture store for twenty-five dollars a week. My

brother he works, too. So we get on very well now. . . . Yes, sir, they'll be ready to-morrow at four. Good-day, sir."

Wednesday night as I dropped into a saloon to see if anybody was there who wanted somebody to listen to him, who should be on hand but one of my buddies at my first steel plant? As we treat back and forth he eyes me keenly—"Well, what *you* doin' for a livin' now"—and I have to do some quick thinking to keep ahead of him with the explanation of my failure to stay either on the open-hearth with him, or in the later sheet-mill.

"You're right," he agrees, "I'd quit, too—them hours on the floor is too long. But my boss, he got me exempted from the draft, and I can't leave him."

After hearing all about my old pals and seeing him off on his train to the steel town, I ask Elizabeth how the questions are coming, and whether her public grows any more polite:

"Say, I've had the funniest bunch o' human beings you ever saw to-night. What do you think? With all these questions about every place in the world every half second, up comes one lady and says, 'Did any person ask you about a Brownville train to-night?'—'s if I could remember! 'N a nice lookin' party comes sailin' up 'n asks how can she send her mother to Florida. 'Well,' I says, 'she can go to Washington and then take the Seaboard Air Line down.' You should 'a' seen her face. I wondered what to goodness I'd done. She says: 'Why, she's my mother! I wouldn't let her go *that* way. I want to send her by *passenger train!*'

"Tired, well, I'll say I am. But just you wait until Saturday. I'm goin' to deck out in some new duds and show myself a little attention. Believe me, I ain't going to work or anything but just walk down street. . . . Money? Well now you're right. It does take money. My new hat cost eighteen dollars and fifty cents, and I paid my good

twelve dollars for a nifty little hand-bag to carry. But I gotta have 'em all. That girl over there, she buys perfume at six dollars and fifty cents per for just a tiny little bottle.

"So you're married? Aw, you married men! Say, I just wish I had right here now"—and she made a large pile with her hands—"all the dollar bills married train-men and others have given me to call up their wives and tell 'em any excuse I'd a mind to. Once a fellow threw down *a nickel* right here in this station, and says, 'When you get that number tell her Jersey City's on the wire?'... Not me—*not for no nickel!* Then he goes in a booth and in a far-away voice says, 'Why, hello, Dearie—yes, I'm in Jersey City. I'm awful sorry but I can't get home till Tuesday. Are you all right? That's good.' And then he joins another man and two lady friends ten feet away! Makes me sick!"

Here the well-groomed buyer of six-fifty perfume returned, ready to leave in a hurry for the end of her turn:

"I got to sit up all night with mother. She's sick with gastritis—whatever that is—and has dreadful pains. My brother's been sitting up with her, but he can't do it another night without havin' to lose time from his job. I guess I'll be sleepy around here to-morrow night all right."

And to think the old time economists used to tell us about the "economic man" or woman who left all his ordinary relationships behind him as soon as he got on the job to earn a living! The wonder is that we all do as well as we can with such a network of personal connections around us to be kept from snarling—on the job and off.

Thursday was spent in a near-by coal town. Came away with board and lodging arranged for, and with instructions to report in working clothes and my new miner's cap at No. 4 mine about six-thirty Monday.

I'd hardly go as far as to say my first impressions were good. I have in mind the dirty geese and the assortment

of rusted tubs, basins, cans, bottles, and dead cats in the ditches. But there are beautiful hills on all sides, white lace curtains in all the windows—all front-room windows—and electric lights going in many houses all day. The woman who cooked a very good dinner for me, extended her half-dried hand with a very friendly smile, and spoke of the early coming of new paper and paint. Like every other mother she was happy that the baby had got fat again so quick after his "bronical pneumonia." When I thought the baby's crib represented the discovery of perpetual motion, she explained:

"You wind it up, Mister, with a spring, an' it keeps a-goin' without any attention. It's fine when you've got a washin' or somethin' like that, but it does spoil the baby and makes it hard to get him to sleep in anybody else's house."

Weather is pretty cold here, but they say it's neither hot nor cold 120 feet below ground.

White collars are nice, but I hate to think of all the interesting people I've evidently been missing because of 'em.

Bitumenburg,
April 30.

Well, for several days I've been a coal-miner—and so far as the *work* is concerned, have enjoyed it.

It's positively queer how little thought you give down there below ground to the things you think you'd bother about. After you strap your little tin-covered battery to your belt, run the rubbered wire up your back, strapping it to the rear of your cap and then inserting the cute little electric lamp into the visor, you sort of forget it's there. So when you get into the "cage" or hoist with the other miners and drop down 120 feet suddenly—often with a feeling that your stomach is saying "I don't quite follow you!"—and start off down the butt, or main passageway,

to your location, you forget that your tiny lamp is all there is between you and the densest blackness. Somehow it seems a perfectly proper place for you to be at that moment —except when you fail to stoop low enough and so get a bump on your head.

Monday I was told to be buddy to the wire-man. Pick and dinner-pails in hand we started off and walked *a mile and a half or more* through one passageway after another, till we reached the place where some wires for bringing current to the coal-cutting machines had to be taken down. It was, for sure, a mile and a half in the school of hard knocks, but each helped to pound in the lesson of how to walk in a mine, bending over but still keeping an eye out —and up—for a low spot in the roof.

My lamp seemed to make a perfect circle of light and darkness—as though I carried a hoop like a sort of tunnel's mouth straight up and down from my head to my feet, in such a way that, as I moved, one foot was overtaken in the blackness while the other stepped forward into the moving tunnel of light. And out from the blackness farther ahead of us would march the silent procession of mute, coal-shiny walls, with occasionally an entrance to a side-chamber or a group of timbers holding up the rock from our heads. And then these, after advancing silently to meet us out of the farther dimness, would pass on from the edge of the tunnel of light at my side and in an instant step silently into the tunnel of absolute darkness at my elbow.

It made me think of Ulysses:

"Much I have seen and known—cities and men—yet all experience is an arch wherethrough gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades forever and forever as I move."

Only this seemed to go the other way—the untravelled world kept coming toward us—up to us—and then silently and suddenly stepping past us into oblivion.

From a photograph by the Bureau of Mines

ABOUT TO DESCEND INTO THE MINE

Waiting, safety-lamp in hand, ready to be counted safely into the hoist or "cage," to descend to the "bottom" where the "man-trip," or train, awaits them

And yet, as I say, perhaps because you can't see your own lamp, you seem to forget that a mine is always dark—unutterably dark. You walk and you work always with things in view, or perhaps you take out a newspaper from your pocket—always you see it plainly. It wasn't until I was left alone that first morning for a half-hour, and happened to take off my cap so that it fell face in on my coat. Then what a blackness! I thought I had suddenly gone blind—till I recalled that, of course, I was in a mine, and 'twas my lamp that had been doing such noble service. As I hid my lamp again I found myself quickly whistling or singing or jiggling my leg. Why so? Well, because if I didn't make some noise or some motion sitting there without seeing or feeling or hearing anything at all, I would begin to feel just as if *I wasn't there myself*—as though I was dead and gone and dried up and blown away. Ideas and thoughts are all right, and nice things to have around, but somehow we seem to require something in the way of physical matters such as are reported to us by eye or ear or muscle in order to really prove to us that we're alive and on the job.

When somebody comes near, you understand how much his lamp counts because that's all you can see of him until he comes within the three or four feet where your own lamp discloses his body. Even then it's hard to see his features, partly through lack of light and partly through the grime on his face.

My first morning we saw few other workers because we were taking wires out of a worked-out passage. The work was hard only when I had to use my pick to dig the insulator-pins out of the roof above me—a very awkward position and bound to put dust in the eyes. At noon, after five hours' work, we sat down on some lumber with our dinner-buckets in our laps.

"You've always got to have a good-fittin' cover on your

bucket 'round here," said the wire-man, an energetic and ambitious chap of about twenty. "These rats are all-fired educated, and if you don't watch out they'll get in and take everything but your coffee. They don't like coffee."

After eating, we loafed and talked till one o'clock. Somehow the time did not drag when we got to work again. A few minutes before four we cleaned up the job and started back to the hoist. I certainly felt less tired and was also much less dirty than when I finished my first twelve hours on the open-hearth, or my second ten hours on the cold rolls. Me, I'm for the mines and the eight-hour day.

Yesterday the boss gave me a harder day on "the bottom." That's near the shaft where the little, low-built motors run by trolley wires and bring their trains or "trips" of fifteen or twenty cars of coal. My job was to uncouple each of these cars and at the right moment give it a push down the track, where another chap passed it on to the "cager" who ran it on to one of the two hoists. Then he gave the signal to the engineer up above, who whisked it up to the tipple where it was weighed, credited to the miner whose check was found in the car, and then emptied into a railroad car for shipment to Cleveland or elsewhere. Some of the cars were very mean to move and required a good deal of back work. One part of the job also called for quickness. That was to get down on your knees and, at the precise instant when the motor had gone onto a side-track, throw a little switch or "latch," as they call it, so that the "trip" of cars would go straight on toward the shaft. Once the motor-man came too fast for my inexperience and several cars went off the track—much to my dismay. But the boys only laughed and yelled to Mike to come back with his motor and push 'em on again. Later another motor-man came in very swiftly. I had a quick picture of the cars piled up again, with me between them and the loaded cars standing on the other track.

It was a thick instant. Luckily my buddy saw the danger and quickly took my place at the latch, while I breathed prayers of thankfulness and ran to set the brakes, or put the wooden blocks or sprags into the wheels before the cars ran into the bottom of the shaft.

But even yesterday's pushing was easier than many days I've seen in the steel-mills.

To-day I went again with the wire-man and enjoyed it the most yet. My job was to pick holes in the coal walls or slate roof for him to locate the insulator-pins for carrying the wire into a new part of the mine. We were nearer the real miners or "loaders." Every once in a while we'd hear out of the darkness somewhere a gruff warning of "Fire!" We'd duck quickly around a corner and wait until a great boom shook the earth and the air most uncomfortably, with possibly some slate dropping about us from the roof. Shortly afterward we'd hear the loader shovelling into his car the coal his explosion had brought down, as we sniffed the smoke on its way out through the entry.

Then, too, the driver and his mule would pass oftener, bringing empty cars to the loaders and taking filled ones up to the "parting" or side-track, where he'd couple them into the "trips" for the motor-man to haul out to "the bottom."

The driver in that "face" or passage is young and friendly, but how he does swear and shout and beseech and whistle and pound at his long-eared "Mutt!" How "Mutt" can go as fast as he does, running without any safety-lamp on his head into the darkness, placing with certainty his feet between the ties and among the pieces of fallen slate, and keeping his head safe from the roof, now high, now low, I swear I don't know! Horses, they tell me, can't do it.

After these few days of it, I'd say I could stand—and enjoy—for eight hours a day anybody's job in the mines except the mule's. If I were in his position I'm hanged if

I wouldn't do as he often tries to do—kick the lining out of anybody that comes too near his heels.

But I must say—also after only a few days of it—that the trouble with coal-mining is that the eight hours underground with your buddy, your little light, and your pick are only a part of it all; you've got to spend the other sixteen in a mining town, or, as it's often called, a mining-camp.

But more about that later.

Now for bed and as much of sleep as possible under the circumstances before the call at five-thirty.

Bitumenburg,
Thursday, May first.

To-day brought more the feel of a real miner than any time yet, and my back and shoulders aren't sure they're happy about it, though the rest of me is. At least five of those cars of slate that the boys down at "the bottom" pushed onto the cage were the product of mine own hand and shovel—and back and shoulders.

When they sent me down to the job they cautioned me to use water every once in a while so as not to take the temper out of my shovel. I didn't understand them at first. Finally I saw the joke and answered that I'd try to be careful, but that where I'd worked before I had always insisted on having a special water-cooled shovel. To-night as I came up I suggested to the boys that the pumps be given an extra turn so as to take up the wetness caused by my sweat. Slate plus shovel certainly equals sweat. Still it was a good day down there mostly by myself and my shovel and my friendly little lamp—with occasional words with the driver or the Polish loader working in the same heading.

But about those sixteen hours above ground as mentioned:

On my advance trip down here last week my eyes and nose noticed too many things to make my prospective coal-mining altogether a delight to think about. The little old

Irish landlady, too, had a good deal to say about my having three or five roommates. But, after all, that number seemed to go pretty well with the kitchen and the back yard, and I might as well take the whole dose. But I confess I was stumped when I arrived and found that the three beds were all *double*. Also when I was introduced to my bedfellow, Jack, who proceeded to tell me that he had just returned—without any baggage—from a week's spree, and would I go with him to find a little whiskey to help top off and stop off with.

The county is supposed to be dry, but we made the round of three or four kitchens where we stepped over the babies and the *chickens*, and were assured each time in a different accent: "No got—no got nodding." Later I considerately managed to get separated from him and finally went back and turned in—to waken at one to find him almost too much under the influence to explain: "They didn't (hic) know you—'fraid of you. Had plenty when (hic) went back by self! . . . G' night."

His constant snores or chokings were terrible to hear and hard to quiet without ferocious jabs and pokes. At three the two other boarders came in from their night shift. So it was a pretty bad night—surpassed, I guess, only by the night on the cattle-boat, when the hay we had in our sleeping-sacks proved to house some husky, cattle-fed graybacks.

The next day I asked Granny, the landlady, if I couldn't sleep by myself in the idle third bed.

"Well, Oi should say not! What do you think Oi am that Oi could afford to give ivry boarder a bed and beddin' to hisself! Sure, Jack snores, *he has tonsils!* He's had 'em since 'e was a bye. . . . And you're no better'n him either, sor."

Last night the third bed was filled by two boys who came in from the rain after stumbling through the lightless and watery cinder roads in the absence of sidewalks.

"Oh, say, this is the first bed in three nights! But, believe me, we've sure been hittin' the high spots. Wow, that feels good! . . . But say, it's got to be an all-fired good job to hold me in this dark place. . . . Say, what'll we do without no baggage? Oh, I guess we can double-shift this underwear and it wouldn't kick none if we do make it work night turn. And when we get a little stake we can buy a lot o' truck. Goo' night, all."

At least their tonsils seemed all right, thanks be. Jack's are not quite so bad now that he is living a very simple life, having spent his last dime in the speak-easies and already owing too many fellow-citizens to permit any further "touches" or expenditures of any kind till next pay-day—a long, long two weeks.

So you see, it's a relief to pile out of my blankets and leave my, or rather *our*, sheet—yes, our *one* sheet—and get off to the wholesome dirt and darkness and interest of the underground, "inside." The misery is to come back—with aching shoulders and blackened hands and face and back and chest—to find nothing but a basin on the filthy back porch. I think I'll make a practice of shaking hands with every bathtub I meet the rest of my days!

This afternoon, after my eight hours with shovel and slate, I came home black as night and sweaty and tired through the rain and mud. Somehow the little stream down in the bebottled back yard never seemed to be so full of unsightly and unsavory things. Certainly the back porch never had such a collection of unmentionable litter upon it, nor were the babies and children ever in such disreputable condition. On Granny's urging I sat me down wearily with only a little washing of my hands and tried to be interested in the food. Most of the boarders were devouring their ham and potatoes from off the red tablecloth, spread, of course, in the little kitchen. (The front room is only for the state occasions, like weddings and funerals.) Over

there in the corner, next week's washing was piled high—with the dirty towels hanging on the door. Back of me on the lounge were thrown the half-dried clothes in process. In arm's reach on the chair, by the stove, sat the dirty baby, whimpering, with nothing on but a solitary, soiled woolen garment, it's mother shouting to it: "Now you just wait there till I finish this job and I'll attend to you!" Hardly a yard from the table she was doing the week's washing, scrubbing and splashing strenuously over the wooden tub. Next to her by the door was my bedfellow, Jack, driven inside by the rain, stripped to his waist and standing over the basin with many snortings and splashings, getting the coal dust from off his hairy chest and husky back. In between, underneath and around were twelve-year Margaret, little Ethel with her wan cheeks and eyes and clubbed foot, and Granny—all in a steamy mess and muddle of serving and washing and sweeping and crying and scolding.

And in it all I tried to eat—and I guess because of that equation of slate and shovel succeeded.

I wonder who coined that phrase: "It's a great life—if you don't weaken." It's a life-saver.

After supper my courage wasn't strong enough to follow Jack's example, but I did manage to get most of the dirt off into the little basin and thence out from the porch onto the ground, whence it runs under the porch of the tenants of the other half of the house. Some of it, I must say, apparently stayed on my face in spite of all my efforts, judging from the looks of the towel—*our* towel—or as you might say, the "club towel." And it takes something more than a little pale grime to be noticeable on that club towel after it has been used a few days by the "members"!

My roommates speak as though the Saturday-night bath can be engineered with satisfaction and also efficiency. But it almost seems selfish for them to insist upon having it, because it means moving the whole family out of the

room which serves not only for kitchen, pantry, and dining-room, but also for laundry, sitting-room, parlor, and nursery. Ordinarily the children and grown-ups of the family go to bed an hour or so later than I do, so that on any but Saturday night the bath would mean less sleep for the day's work.

Talk about the simple life in a faucetless home. It seems to me highly complex.

Thanks to the daylight-saving, I've done my eight hours, suppered, washed, and got into my clean clothes, and still it's not yet six o'clock. It has cleared off and the children are out on the road dragging home over the rough cinder ruts their little wagons full of coal, picked up at the company dumps while others carry water from the wells. And as they work they follow the example of their elders; little tots of eight and ten curse at each other shockingly. Across the street a foreigner is shouting at yard's length in a conversation with his wife, who finally ends it and rushes into the house with screams of "Aw, you go to h——!" Under the bridge other dirty little tikes play in the stream in the midst of the sea of litter of rusty tins and irons and rags and papers and baskets so that nowhere is the gravel bottom to be seen.

From down-stairs for the tenth or fifteenth time since supper the baby screams the sudden scream of pain from a tumble or a slap, followed by the scream of exasperation from shrill-voiced and overworked mother. And now the wagon of coal has caused trouble: "You hit me again, you ——!" yells one of the youngsters of nine at another. "You just hit me again, —— —— you!" Up the road loll with obvious unconcern two young miners who turn in toward the kitchen of the neighbor woman. Her nine-year old daughter will help her hand out the beer or whiskey, while one of the babies sleeps peacefully in its crib and a chicken or two seek tidbits under the stove or table.

And beyond the back yards across the road and up above the stream, more yelling children and barking dogs and muddy, cackling geese show up against the splendid green of the hillside as it rises majestically up and up to meet the glorious blue and white of sky and cloud of a wondrous curfew-time. Yes, there's the bell from the little church now!

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him—!" But somehow He seems far away from His children here.

They tell me that many, many coal-camps are much worse.

"Why, I remember," said one chap last night, "and it wasn't long ago either—when the mud was knee-deep right here in these streets. These cinders make it fine now."

But it's time to go up to the ball. It's being given for the benefit of the new Polish church. I'm assured that all the beauty and the chivalry of the town is to be gathered there.

Bitumenburg,
Friday,
May 2.

The most interesting day in the mines to date! I've been a real miner—that is a "loader"—and sent up to the tipple car after car of coal, loosened by the powder of mine own tamping and exploding, brought down to the floor with mine own pick, and loaded into the car with mine own shovel and sweating shoulders. A few weeks of such work and I could be a capable loader, for it was a day not only of work but of instruction.

I was delighted, after I adjusted my lamp and reported for duty, to be assigned to an experienced miner who was able to speak my own language—almost; for his Scotch was so very burry that I often had trouble understanding him. But I did get enough to make it a most profitable and enjoyable day, well worth its cost in sweat and muscle.

"Mac" was sure enough born for a mine; in fact his shortness makes him a perfect fit for our five-foot seam of coal. In spite of his fifty-three years he's a hard worker and a real shovel-wrestler.

"Yes, sir, me first minin' was done when Ah was ten years old—and Ah've been at it ever since every day Ah wasn't sick—or enjoyin' meself. Mony's the time I mind me and me fawther starrtin' off a-walkin' to the mine in Scawtland at three in the mornin' and a-gettin' back at six—me mother a-washin' me face, oonlacin' me shoes and a-puttin' of me to bed without me knowin' the dufference till 'twas three again and time to get oop an' awf."

I think I should have liked to meet that father who gave him his training for his life's work.

"He allus told us laads—'Keep her awf her feet,'"—he would puff as he picked away at the bottom while warily watching the great overhanging cliff of coal near and above our heads, till finally, perhaps with the help of a touch of iron bar, a ton or two would fall and break obligingly for our shovels at our feet.

"And another thing I've allus minded me of—'Remember, laads,' me fawther'd say, 'civility is a better protection to the head than a steel helmet.'"

A born teacher is Mac. "Now coom over here so ye can change your hands. There, ye've got it joost right. 'Use your bean wherever it can save your back,' is a motto o' mine and one that's saved me mony pains."

And always his words were followed with the chance to *do* the thing—which is good teaching. So after he had started in the exactly right direction, I worked the long auger-drill to make the slender six-foot hole for the powder, tamped in the watered slack upon it, then lighted the "squib," and finally—and only with great self-control—walked instead of ran away while it burned toward the charge. From the next "room" or working-chamber I

watched the explosion through the "break-through," and felt as if I were on the Western front as the flame shot out and the earth and air heaved viciously, and slate and coal rattled down. Tons and tons of it were pushed out toward our car, some lumps requiring the pick before they could be lifted. In a few fast minutes we'd have it full to overflowing and would go back to our box to sit down for a bit of a chat, till the boy and his mule would carry it off to the "parting" and we could push in an empty for another loading.

Apparently my recent researches into the fine art of shovelling have not been in vain, judging from his compliments. But coal is a delight to negotiate, compared with the heavy dolomite, or iron ore, or manganese, of an open-hearth. It's more dusty, but that's a small matter.

I judge that it's the uncertainty of the driver's coming that makes a loader work almost feverishly till the car is filled—when he proceeds to loaf. I'm told that after a few years of such training a miner finds it hard on his self-respect to have to adopt the slow, even, twelve-hour gait he finds in the ordinary mill. I noticed, too, that the loader's training of hustle-loaf made even the wire-man and others follow the same plan (for most of them have been loaders at some time) with the result that I'm sure the day-workers throughout the mine, even though miles away from any foreman, give a better day's stint of muscle and service than the labor gangs I've been in where the foreman's eye, and, more to the point, his *voice*, were constantly in evidence.

The amount of pride he took in his possession of all the mysteries of mining was splendid. "At first, of coorse, Ah'd roon if Ah saw the gas-fire a-coomin' oot from the face. But later Ah cu'd gauge to a few feet how far 'twud coom—and sit still on me box comfortable and cool-like."

His skill represented, to be sure, forty-three years in the

dark hallways of the school of pick and shovel, located in various States here and back in "Scawtland." There the mines were mostly 1,500 to 2,000 feet down, and generally "gassy." "Wy, there, uf a mon'd coom to worrk with even one match in hees pocket, he'd get sixty days in jail forr't!"

Of schooling he had practically none at any time.

"Wull, it do seem to me that all this here oonrest is like to coom from the illiments—for, dootless, these be oonsettled by the warr and all that there connonadin'."

But, personally, I'd like to see the man who could lessen the huge respect which I brought away with me for the contribution he has made to the doing of the world's work and the meeting of the world's needs with the untiring energy of his hands and shoulders and the interest and enthusiasm of his heart and head. Indeed all work and life may be a school if always you carry in your memory the wisdom of a wise "fawther!"

"Uf a mon can tell ye soomthin', laads, don't be impoodent—thank him."

"Ah dunno," he answered, when I asked why he had never gone into any other work. "Ah dunno"—and then a moment later—"but Ah've never liked a boss too close around me, y' oonderstand?"

That seems to be the general testimony. There is no boss near by to take away the pleasure of working as much or as little as you like, or to steal the joy of using your own skill and "know-how" for getting your results. Furthermore, these results, with the help of the watchful "check-weigh-man" paid by the union to sit alongside the company's man and note all weights, can be depended on to represent a certain definite amount in dollars and cents. If the number of cars sent up looks like a good day's income, or if it's "a morning after the night before," you can take your dinner-pail and walk out without bothering to

wait for any whistles. To-day, for instance, the Welshman in the next room left at two while his grandson continued. I guess he deserves to leave when he wants to. He started in a big mine over there when he was ten, and has mined ever since. He's now seventy! A fair-spoken, even-tempered man he seems.

Too often, I fear, many hours are lost by waiting for a careless, irresponsible, mule-abusing driver to bring the cars, or for the machine-runners to sober up after pay-day and come back to undercut the "face" with a gash of about six inches at the level of the floor so that the explosion can find the coal "off its feet," and therefore ready to loosen with the shock and tumble to the floor.

"Dese d—— fool cutters—when they have money, dey do no work. No money?—den work. Dey no cut coal to-day—me no can work. No coal?—no money me," was the way my Polish loader of yesterday, with his rising inflections, told his tale of woe as he found himself compelled to go home at noon.

To-day Mac and I worked more than an hour—and so lost the benefit of several tons of coal—jacking and pushing and lifting a heavily loaded car which our driver let go off the tracks into a watery hole a short distance from the face.

"In many's the mine Ah been in he'd be given his time for thot," wailed Mac again and again. "Besides, Ah've asked often and often for iron in place o' these here wooden rails."

If "the final test of knowledge is to prevent," as some Frenchman has said, then it certainly seems that management very often fails to meet that test by foreseeing and preventing the little accidents and losses of time and strength which finally make the worker accustomed to below-par production, and, therefore, below-par earnings for the company and himself.

"Ah, 'tis often and often this happens, Buddy," he

would say to soothe my own regret at losing my chance to help make a good showing for the day. As it was, we got only eleven cars instead of the thirteen we could have gotten if we had been given better millwright or track-layer service—and instead of the fifteen or more if I'd come in as early as he.

Well, at any rate, I'm a better man for my day's closer acquaintance with the rough but shiny face of a seam of coal, and the rough but true and wholesome heart of my Scotchie Mac. I'm much obliged to have met them both.

Oh, yes, about the ball.

From the row of hard-working matrons sitting with the children on the chairs, the boys with the pompadours and the girls with the tight skirts and the brown, muscular arms, to the foreigners with the great mustaches, the whole town was there—and evidently hugely enjoying it. The energetic and attractive young wives of some of the younger bosses did a big business at the counter covered with cakes, pop, and ice-cream cones. The imported music was greatly appreciated. If I had danced my first choice would have been a slight little blonde, who seemed the belle in popularity. Perhaps it was just as well I didn't, for I'm told since that——

"Well, yes, Miss —— is a little wayward—and she has a child.... But she's well thought of."

I've no doubt that it's hard for a community to be particular about morals when the absence of lights, water and sewage systems, recreation places, playgrounds, sidewalks and lawns, bathtubs, and other such-like wholesome things of life make it difficult to be particular about much of anything else.

It seems to me certain, too, that the short eight-hour day down in the headings makes every one of these lacks more dangerous, and the moral results more questionable.

After eight hours' sleep there is still another eight for the enjoyment of life—wholesome life if the aids and facilities are there, unwholesome if they're not. If the work were twelve hours it would be a matter of piling into bed—perhaps after a whiskey-beer or two to make sure of a sound slumber—to get ready for the next turn. Long hours bring their own moral complications, too, but it's a question which to choose for raising a family: a town of the twelve-hour shift with good sanitation and recreation, or one with the eight-hour shift and nothing but four-room houses with no plumbing and without the other civic advantages which seem to go with it.

I wonder what job to-morrow will bring. I could hardly be a motor-man, or even his "snapper" or coupler-boy, without more experience. The "trapper's" job is too easy—just to open the door or throw the "latch" at certain junction places. Of course I couldn't be a "fire-boss," because he has to pass a State examination before he can make his daily examinations of every passage and "room." I'll be just as happy *not* to drive a mule—they're too dangerous. My friend Otto was all doubled up and had to leave to-day because of an awful kick from his hard-working but highly contentious "Mutt."

Well, here's hoping 'twill be as interesting as to-day—and that "Jack's *tonsils*" will let me have a fairly decent sleep in the meantime.

Bitumenburg,
Saturday,
May 3.

Another hard but interesting day—as "track-layer's helper."

Was "buddy" to Domenico, an Italian born in France. In spite of his seven years in this country he speaks Italian and French, but only a little English. He is young enough and bright enough to make a good deal of himself if he could

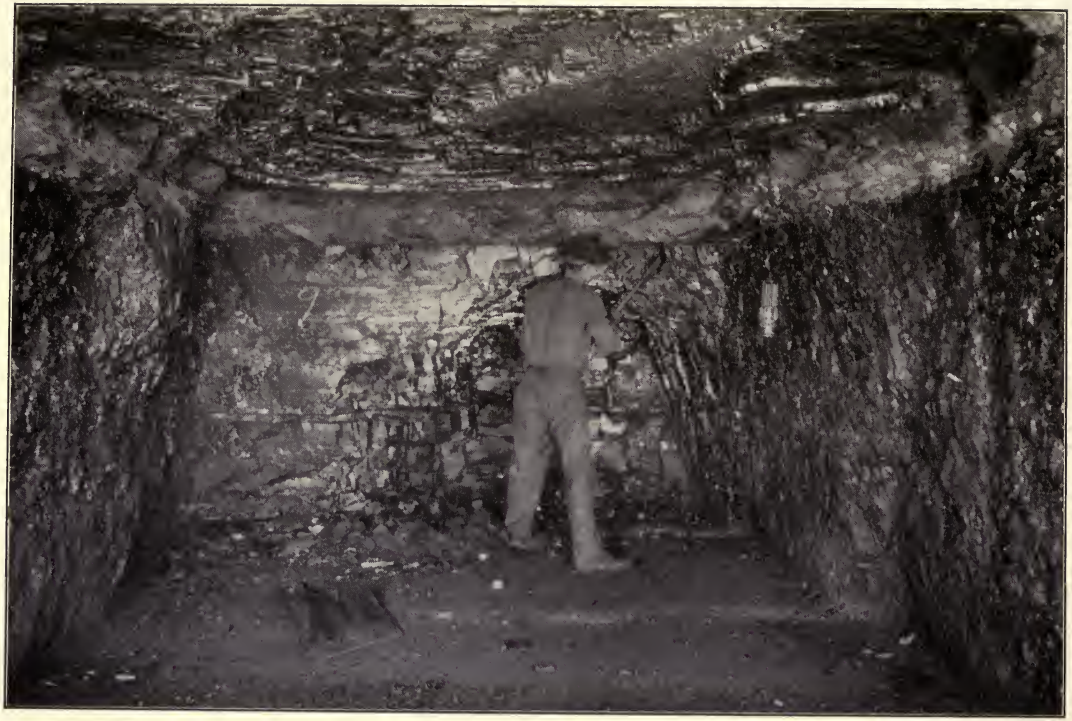
somehow contrive to add English to his tool-box. But he knows little if anything outside the mines and mining towns, and the chances of his making the break for English are poor. Anyway, he's a good, industrious worker, seems to know his job, and, in line with mine habits, works hard for a good period and then relaxes a few minutes with his dinner-pail on his lap ("no eat—no can work," as he puts it), and does a day's turn that is mighty creditable, all the more so considering that the foreman is far away.

Our job was to remove the tracks from old and abandoned rooms, relaying them in others—a day of pulling or pounding spikes, "picking" out little trenches for the ties carried out from the abandoned rooms, carrying long rails from one place to another, and so on. Nothing too easy on arms and backs—nor yet too hard.

Came closer to the danger of coal-mining than any time yet. In one or two of the oldest rooms a lot of roof had already fallen in, and many of the timbers, though still standing, were badly bent or broken. On one the cross-piece at the top was bent down at each end by the weight of the hill above it, and as I worked I could see fresh cracks appear in the middle of it! I kept as close to the good posts as possible when pulling out the spikes or ties, and was very quick to respond to my buddy's "Listen!" when occasionally he would stop, as all miners seem to do, to see if the slate is giving its warning crackle. As we sat lunching in one passage and there came a great, dull boom, he said: "Dere! Rock he fall where we work little time ago."

On the whole, safety seems to have a lot of everybody's thought, from the fire-boss, who must daily—or rather, nightly—chalk the date on every room before the cutters or loaders dare start work, down to the most foreign worker and the most Godless mule-pounder.

"Stop!" said Mac, as we walked out yesterday and



TAKING DOWN THE FIRST SHOT

After the machine men have undercut the "face," the coal, thus got "off its feet," is made to fall by the explosion. The date shown by the chalk mark indicates the fire-boss's daily inspection for gas. Without it no work can be begun

heard a dull, distant thud. "Always keep your ears cocked in a mine!"

Sure enough, fifty yards farther on, we found a few hundred pounds of slate had dropped ahead of us onto the track where we walked.

Thursday a Polish loader helped me out of a dangerous situation where I thought I had to stand and shovel right under a very bad piece of roof.

"No! No!" he said when he looked at it. "He fall down—you keel. Put dees here." And he shoved my car under the bad place. "Now come down—keel d—— fool car!"

Later he took his bar and brought down several tons of the bad place right into the car—a very good piece of head work.

Those who load "rooster" coal have to go into worked-out rooms, saw out the farthermost supporting timbers so as to bring down the five feet of slate roof with the three-foot vein of good "rooster" above it, sawing and retreating till the whole room has fallen in. Apparently they do it with great skill, trained listening, and observation—and moderate safety. It doesn't look good to me.

To my surprise, the old style safety-lamp is carried by the fire-boss to *detect* gas. Gas gets in through the wire meshes above the flame and ignites with a little pop, the wire preventing outside explosion by absorbing the heat. Before the lamp was invented I understand "fire devils" ignited with a torch the gas when found in small quantities, and then lay down on the floor, covered all in wool, which singes but does not burn, till the gas—it always floats and burns higher than the air—was thus consumed! Where the gas was too great to be burned, a grindstone and steel were used for striking sparks enough to give the miner light. These are not hot enough to ignite the gas. In gaseous mines certain powders are used for exploding,

which go off so quickly that they do not ignite the gas—taking one five-thousandth of the time, says an expert, of the flash of ordinary black powder such as Mac and I watched yesterday—which, by the way, was followed by the flash of the gas released by the coal and ignited by the explosion or by the burning paper of our charge.

The State inspector's men visit every mine regularly, and their suggestions are posted publicly, but nobody yet seems to have done anything to lessen the very real danger factor carried around in the hind hoofs of almost every mule. Almost every miner can tell of this or that sad experience with those hoofs; they are genuinely feared. After talking with the boss driver the other night it almost looked to me as though there ought to be something like "The Psychological Bureau of Mule-Handling Research."

"Well, I've learned," he said very seriously, "that if a stubborn mule fights back, you can beat him into submission—if your arms don't give out on you. But if he won't fight back and just takes his punishment, he's got you licked before you start."

"That boss can do things with a mule in a minute nobody else could do in a year," testified one of his admirers.

Or perhaps something could be done with biology. Everybody says a mule's more dangerous than slate because the slate's rattle gives warning. It's my idea that some Luther Burbank might so use serums from a rattlesnake that Mr. Mule would *rattle before he'd kick!*

I remember being told by a lecturer that in Ohio a returned soldier, taken back onto his old mine job, caused a strike because he didn't get his same old mule back. It sounded unreasonable—in fact it was told to prove the worker's unreasonableness. The miners here think it sensible.

"Why, mebbe he'd trained that one and knew all about him, and didn't know none of the other mules in the mine

—even then it's dangerous work. He was only one of these here safety-first cranks."

One of many stories about the highly developed mule brain and mule self-respect is that once a driver was so mad that he planned to murder the beast. So he purposely left an empty car at the bottom of a grade in a black passageway, and then drove him down on the run with several heavy cars unbraked behind him. Mr. Long-Ears merely vaulted nicely into the empty car.

This afternoon—at three because of Saturday—six of us got into an empty car down at the parting to save the mile walk to the "bottom." I felt sorry for the poor beast. After a day's abuse from his driver, he had to gallop almost the whole way with the din of Bedlam behind him—calls and shouts to him in six languages and frightful curses in one (American curses seem always to get the most action and are certainly most generally used), whistlings, bangings of powder-cans on his flanks, hammerings of six dinner-pails in the car. And he had to keep his feet and head as he raced, while we ate the dirt thrown up by his hoofs between yells and swears.

"Why only seven car to-day, Joe?" said one of our six to another as we came to the "bottom."

"If I take all d—— fool coal to-day, no can work next week," replied Joe with a twinkle.

Last night I had a talk with one of those in authority, a fine type of man.

"Five years ago," he said, "you could have got a room in any one of a score of homes. Now they'd rather have all four rooms than the money you'd pay and the discomfort of living in the other three. It's a good sign. . . .

"The young women are changing fastest of all. If one of 'em marries a bright young fellow we're sure to have them ask for a better house. If we can't give it, or if they already are in the best of our two or three types of houses,

we soon lose them. She wants to 'get on'—move into better surroundings, you know, 'be somebody'—and he's her chance. One reason we have a hard time keeping things shipshape in the mine is our trouble in getting or keeping men of any big skill—they can do better elsewhere. Just now we've got good company houses standing idle, with laborers in worse houses beggin' us for 'em. But if we fill 'em up with those men, then we won't have any chance at all of gettin' here the skilled men we're after.

"Of course you understand we can't sell houses here; in ten years more or so we'll have the seam all worked out, and then there won't be any town or camp any more here at all. Besides, rent is so low that selling would be hard —and the unions haven't permitted raises.

"We wish we could have better houses—at least a few to begin with—with more than four rooms, a cellar to keep things in, and a shanty for a cow with free pasturage on the hills. Also a wash-shanty at each pit where the men could leave their work clothes to dry while they take a shower, put on good clothes before they walk home through the rain or snow—though they do say in some places where they have these, some of the men are awful slow in usin' 'em." ("Them that's slow in usin' 'em in our part of the country we duck—till they learn better," said one of my five roommates later.)

He confirms the statement that there is a tradition among miners that it is dangerous to wash their backs. Some men are said to have alligator-like collections of years of sweat and coal-dust between their shoulders. But, personally, as long as they live in towns entirely guiltless of bathtub or faucet, I don't see how they could do otherwise than get as much off as they can reach—and save their self-respect by inventing the tradition to excuse the rest.

"The unions are talkin' about demanding a five-day week. We'd be tickled to get them to work an average of five days. Most of 'em work about three now."

He said he had once tried to break away from mining and was in the labor gang of a big steel-plant. But after his years of the miner's fast-work-short-loaf, he couldn't stand the footlessness of "Nothing to do most of the time, yet orders against sitting down. Thirteen men were assigned to move a tank. Two of us handled it easily. It was too bad to kill time that way, so it was 'back to the mines' for me—and for life, I guess."

"Granny" and I have not been on good terms since I objected to Jack and his "tonsils" as bedfellows. Besides all the things described there are too many that cannot be mentioned. So I'm packing up and leaving in a few minutes. Sorry, because I do like it "inside."

Later:

One of my roommates is hardly a Bolshevik but he is unhappy. An American he is, one who has followed the mines in many fields, and for many years, and is still a wanderer:

"This State is the worst of all. They don't do nothin' for a laborin' man except get all the work they can outa him. . . . Where the work's less steady than 'tis here, of course the miners can't pay for your faucets and sidewalks and such like. But they needn't make such a fuss about *us!* Durin' the war I saw with my own eyes a shovel of slate put into the cars for every shovel of coal—for the government, mind you. 'Twas by the owner's orders, too! And then if *we* rested a day they called us slackers. Huh!"

Steelville, again,
Sunday, May fourth.

I beg Providence's pardon for assuming so calmly that I had closed the chapter on "Life in a Coal Camp" when I wrote the "Later" on yesterday's notes. All the time Fate was waiting for me around the corner—or at least

down-stairs! I certainly never was so surprised in my life as by what she handed me—with the help of one of her handmaidens.

When I arrived down in the kitchen with my baggage I found Jack taking his bath, so I called through the door into the parlor to Granny to ask if she had the dollar I figured was coming to me.

When she answered "No" very nastily I thought I would dispose of the matter in the normal mine-camp manner. In view of her week of meanness and mine of discomfort, and considering the profane habits of the town generally, it seemed the proper thing to let the matter drop and then grant my permission for all of them to go where the temperature is reported as unvarying though less comfortable than in the mine. According to everything I'd seen and heard in the camp and in our little "club," she would counter with a stronger line of directions for me, and the incident would then be considered closed—with everybody justified and satisfied. That seemed to me the mine-town formula.

But there's a catch somewhere in that formula—judging from what happened.

Daughter, the mother of the children, shouted something to Jack, who jumped quickly into his trousers but refused to open the door for me till daughter got out the front door and around onto the back porch. As I started out, suitcase in one hand, sweater and dinner-pail in the other, she rushed at me screaming:

"You'll tell my mother to go to h——, will you? I'll learn ye! —— —— ye!"

Before I had any idea of it all, she drew off and delivered a magnificent blow that drew blood on my cheek-bone!

Unfortunately, one of the things I'd never learned at college was what to do when a lady assaults you. So I was greatly puzzled, but did manage to push her off. When she returned like a wild-cat, I used an uppercut of my

dinner-bucket to keep her at safe distance. Then I grabbed the suitcase she tried to pick up and, fearful of missing my taxi-bus, started backward through the yard. By this time the neighbors had all gathered on all the back porches. With a large lump of coal in her hand she pursued. Luckily bottles were everywhere, and one of them I picked up long enough to counsel caution with her coal while she continued to scream at the top of her voice, as face to face we backed off across the lot.

"You tell her that again! You tell her that again and I'll show ye, you —— ——!"

Finally she stopped and put all her strength into the most compound and most foul assortment of names conceivable—and the war was ended. The neighbors in the bleachers were evidently disappointed to see no further action or casualties, but I was glad to get my waiting bus —and to bid the place a long good-by.

I'm not at all sure I conducted myself with proper vigor, though I hardly know what I could have done without hitting back. I certainly am sorry to have hurt the old lady's or her temperamental daughter's feelings. Still, I guess that for a chap whose pet idea is that what makes the wheels of all of us go 'round is the desire for a satisfying sense of our own individual worthwhileness, and that the cause of practically all friction between people, and especially between people of different groups and statuses, where it is so easy to misunderstand "formulas," is to be found in offended or obstructed self-respect, injured pride, and *hurt feelings*—I say I guess that for such a chap the demonstration was worth its cost in blood and gore. And to think it happened just after I had been advised by Mac that "Civility is a better protection to the head than a steel helmet"!

CHAPTER V

A SECOND COAL TOWN

RETURNING to "base" in Steelville, the search for work in steel was renewed. Again nothing but disappointment. "We're laying 'em off instead of takin' 'em on," or "I'd be glad to take ye into him, y' understand, but the boss jist told me he don't need no more men and not to bother him. . . . Next week? Well, if I was you I'd try. . . . Use the phone to save the fare? Well, I dunno; you'd better come yerself."

By chance I happened to drop in on a federal coal expert with an assortment of questions run onto by my pick and shovel. He expressed the belief that I should try life in a coal town widely noted for its attention to the needs of the miners and their families.

Coaldale,
Sunday, May eleventh.

As the mine is working only four days a week, I was told to report Tuesday morning—and referred for board and room to this place, where I am writing on the kitchen table. I must say it is a lot better than "Bitumenburg." Another miner and I have a large room, and—luxury!—sleep in separate beds. The landlady is a terror for work and also, thank heaven, for something like cleanliness.

"We've been wantin' a better house and askin' and askin' the company fer it fer years. This gives us the room we want, but we couldn't have it without takin' boarders. . . . We've just got in—I've been sick and my husband he's been sick. You never saw such a place as them foreigners

that was here left it! . . . Such a stack of beer kegs and whiskey bottles and filth!—it almost makes me sick now to think of it, and the way we've worked to clean it up with chloride and all."

There's a library and a parlor—with a $150 talking-machine, as usual—and a dining-room. All very nice except for an occasional odor in memory of the former occupants.

The lady of the house looked positively young and pretty this morning with a special Sunday "do" on her hair. So you can see she's an exceptional woman, for:

"Yes, we got these four boys and we've adopted the little girl till she's twenty-one. The boys are all we got left out of fifteen children! The other eleven we lost one way or 'nother—and they was mighty nice children, too. . . . And now the doctor tells me my husband can't live—though he don't know it hisself. . . . Cancer."

The husband makes himself handy around the house while, with plenty of optimism, he gets stronger from his recent appendicitis operation. Altogether they enjoy a lot of happiness, one boy of seventeen "trapping" at certain switches and doors in the mine at three dollars, and the other of nineteen or so working in the company store, the proud owner of a flivver—to say nothing of a pompadour, a handsome face, and ambition.

Even the conversation here is a course in mine practice.

"I ain't been sick a day in my life till now," says husband. "And fer the last few years I been workin' every day and double turn every second Sunday. Ye see, I got ter keep after them pumps—maybe whin I get ter one, it's kickin' like, ye understand, and by the time I gits it fixed I got ter walk fast to git ter the others.

"A few years back one o' the boys reported the mine where I wuz then was beginnin' ter 'squeeze.' The super comes and 'e gits a hundred men to go down and fix tim-

bers to stop it. But instead o' startin' in near the shaft—at the bottom, y' understand—and a-workin' back, 'e takes 'em to the fur end of the mine. And the 'squeeze' it keeps a-gettin' worse and finally it falls in and kills 'em all. My God, it was awful in the town that night."

"Yis-sor, I wuz over at B shortly after the explosion there and volunteered to go down in the dinky bucket they'd rigged up. My God Almighty! I seen sights I never seen before. There on the bottom was fifteen or so men lying natural-like in their clothes. And when you'd go over and touch their clothing—phew! It would all fall to pieces and blow up and fly away! And there 'ud be the body all burnt to a black crisp! I give ye my word—'twas the awfullest o' sights ever I see."

Between his twenty and the boarder's sixteen years of mining I guess I've heard the complete, ghastly details of almost every mine disaster in the State. But if they don't mind it, neither do I, for I'll have only a short time of it. Besides, these electric safety-lamps and the strict prohibition against taking matches into the mine, together with the State's constantly closer supervision, make the work safer each year. Also, I learn with pleasure that there are no mules in this mine.

A Sunday in a small town in this State is a desert of do-nothingness. Those hardy defendants of a certain denomination who are said to represent the minority which controls the State because of their manifest respectability, seem to get dreadfully "het up" about the possibility of a modern Sunday with movies. In the meantime they close their eyes to the all-day sessions in the licensed clubs of the Owls, the Bears, Eagles, etc., and in the boarding-houses of the foreigners, also to the crap games and drinking feasts on the hills near the towns. It certainly appears from the view-point of the car-window that many citizens are also little troubled by the hundreds of thousands of people who

live in manifestly shameful conditions, or by the tens of thousands who work thirteen and a half or fourteen turns of ten and twelve hours every fourteen days in the steel-plants.

The Slavic boarders under the same roof with us—it's a big double house—don't seem to feel badly about Sunday, judging from the noise through the nailed-up door. There will probably be another one added in the morning to the pile of kegs already in our common back yard.

Last week I happened to be waited on by "Gertie" again. She has left the first restaurant, mainly because they wouldn't give her the same tables constantly, so that her friends could always have her service and so give her the tips of friends, not of strangers. She says it makes a difference of a dollar a day. She is much distressed. Husband comes home from France this week. She's sure she doesn't love him, though I urged her to give him a chance before she does anything final. "He may have changed just as much as you have."

But her "Sweet Potato" gave her a sleepless night. He confesses to having a wife and two children! As soon as he can get the children and a separation he wants to marry her—and she him. But the thought of his silence on this detail and of all the delay it means is the biggest shock of her life to date.

Naturally I asked her if he knew that *she* was also married. She gave a quick gasp:

"My Gawd, no!"

Coaldale,
May 14.

I certainly am glad to have proceeded at least this much farther with my education as a coal-miner.

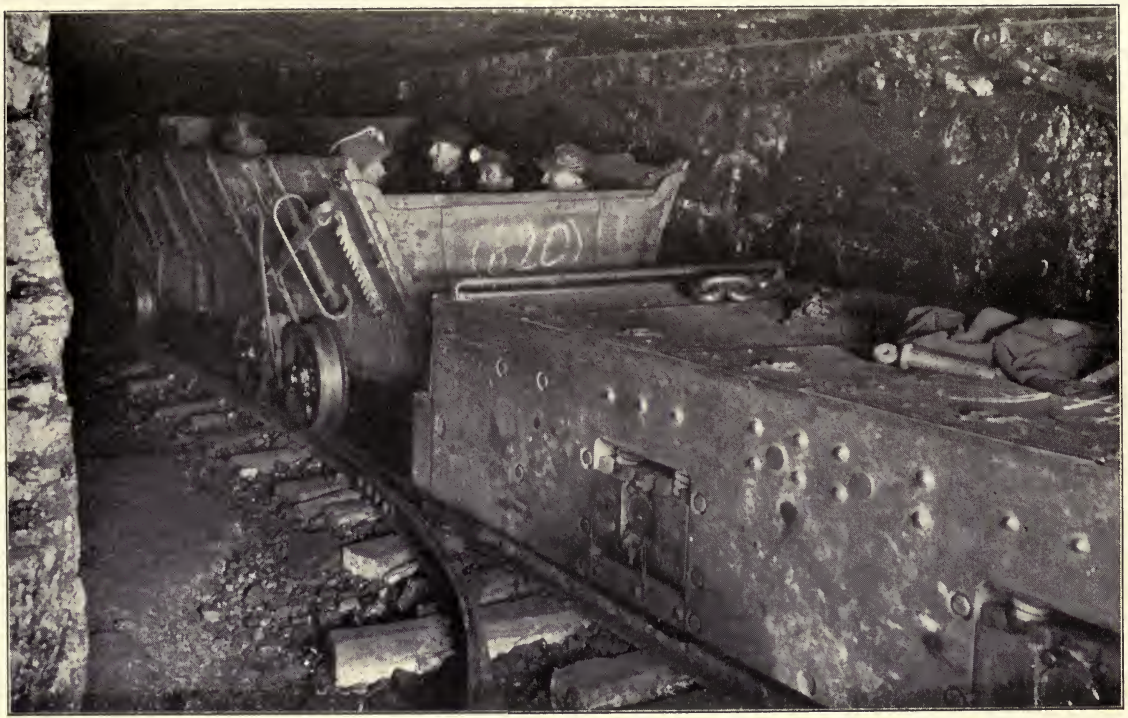
This mine is about five times as big as the other; it covers over 3,000 acres and is worked by over 400 men every day. It is also nearly 200 feet lower down—as I realized more in

my stomach than anywhere else yesterday morning when the engineer shot the cage down the shaft at terrific speed.

It was like coming into a great union depot to get out on the bottom. The place was brilliantly lighted, thoroughly bricked and whitewashed, and covered with a perfect network of tracks and passageways, surrounded with little office and supply rooms or shanties, all filled with miners and motor-men and bosses. I climbed into one of the little coal cars with five or six others, and, sure enough, it soon started off with about fifteen other cars all filled with workers. So we went by train to our locations! Two or three other such trains, or "man trips," left after we did, for other sections.

Something over a mile down the lighted butt or main passageway, we got out at the car-like shanty office of the boss of that section. Here I was assigned to "Steve," a good-natured-looking Croat, and told to go and put up a "swing-door." I hadn't the ghost of an idea what such a door might be, but the boss seemed to think he'd insult anybody who was assigned as I was to "timbering" by telling him about it. So I let it go at that. The trouble was that my "Steve" didn't know much more about it than I did, and perpetrated an immense amount of profanity in trying to solve the problem. But we remembered all we could of the directions, and contrived to make enough progress by the time some kind of a worker or boss would come along and give us instructions for the next move. It seems that a swing-door is so hung that when opened by workers or the motor-trains it always swings back exactly across the passage in such a way as to stay there and stop the air current without fastening. We finally got it to behave fairly well by making the bottom hook or hanger longer than the top one, though the strong current would persist in pushing it somewhat past the proper spot.

I did a lot of hammering and sawing and lifting and



GOING TO THE DAY'S WORK

The "man-trip" or train takes the workers from the "bottom" at the foot of the shaft to their "locations," or near to them. From there the cars are distributed to the various "rooms" at the working "faces" for the loading and returning to the "bottom" and the hoist

talking (in the "no got" and "no can" style of English) with Steve, who had been in this same mine about thirteen years. It is plain to see that it is a well-run mine. In place of the mules the motor goes up to the entries, and then the "snapper" carries in a cable and attaches it to the loaded car so that the motor-man can snake it out by the power of his "crab" or winder. They then skite off to the next place, leaving empties for the loaders or diggers to push in up to the face of the coal in the rooms where they are working. The pair work fast and certainly look more reliable than the mule-drivers—perhaps because getting action continuously out of a mule in a mine is, I am sure, a bigger strain on moral and physical fibre than most men can stand and still be dependable workers.

Of course we took the "man-trip" when the day's job was done back to the bottom. Then we got into a long line of miners standing in a narrow passageway and gradually moved up until our turn came to be counted in the ten to be sent up by the "cager" after the required interchange of signals with the engineer above.

To-day I was assigned to an Italian carpenter or "bratticer," who has been here over eighteen years. We had to shoulder our tools and walk well over a mile to fix a door that was letting too much air leak through it, and then we walked on to cut away slate and coal preparatory to erecting a new frame and door at another point. My body tells me it was a mighty busy day for most of my muscles —and I guess I never before got such a complexion of coal dust and sweat. The wonder is the way these day-workers, away off by themselves, keep at the job all day with enormously less loafing than we used to contrive to do in the steel-mills with the foreman's eye right on us. They must get the habit from their experience as loaders and diggers when they are working strictly for themselves. And then, too, there's a lot more satisfaction in doing a job your own

way for later inspection than to have a foreman swear at you every time you make a false move.

Living quite comfortably. Every room and house has electric lights—unmetred, so that they run day and night—and water running at a faucet in the kitchen or just outside. (For all this the company charges only eight dollars for a four-room house, and all the workers seem to think it very reasonable.) Our "club" towel here is a very special affair.

"Now you kids," the landlady declared to-day, "if I catch you usin' that there roller-towel, there'll be trouble 'round here! That there towel's for the boarders, and don't forget it!"

Seeing that two Mikes are the only other boarders, that makes it a highly exclusive arrangement—compared to some I've known recently.

After work the young "trapper" son and I go down cellar with the wash-tub and the hot teakettle and contrive to get fairly clean. That's better than doing it in the kitchen while everybody's eating supper. But I feel like telling that citizen who has any sort of a bathtub in his home. If so, he ought not to complain of anything.

Coaldale,
May 15.

Now that I'm assistant bratticer, or door-fixer and carpenter, I can't ride in the "man-trip" any more, because I have to help inspect every door we meet and fix it on the spot if it's letting too much air through. That's the reason for tired legs, and also a sore head and neck following a ferocious bump received from taking off my cap with its lamp, and so failing to see a projecting beam.

This matter of doors and air seems to be mighty important in a mine. To-day at the noon-hour my chief showed me where both gas and water were coming out through the coal

at the face of the seam as the digger worked at it. Pipes are laid for the pump to carry away the water. The problem of the gas is up to us bratticers, working, of course, under the fire-boss and others. By means of the doors in the main passages the air is made to go 'round through the smaller passageways or entries, and then to pass into the various rooms, one after another, by means of the "break-throughs," or openings, which connect them close to the face. In some places thick canvas has to be stretched like a veritable stockade in such a way that it conducts the air right up to the face, where it gathers up the gas and hurries it away.

"Gas at the face don't do no harm *provided* it don't *stay* there."

Now if these doors that are supposed to stop the air and make it go another way let a lot of it pass, it's just like a short circuit of electricity—there's just that much less to go where it should. And that's a serious business—with a certain mine and its famous explosion not many miles away.

To-day along came an inspector and held up his little anemometer in one hand and his watch in another:

"That's all right—135 revolutions times 60. That's 8,100 cubic feet of air a-goin' through here every minute. . . . Did you ever know that there are more pounds of air a-comin' into a mine every day than there is pounds of coal a-goin' out of it? Well, it's true. A cubic foot of coal, you understand, weighs about 70 times as much as a cubic foot of air. Now the fans drive into the mine 200,000 cubic feet of air every blessed minute of the twenty-four hours every day in the year—figure it out for yourself. . . . Did you ever stop to think, too, that in winter the air itself carries out more tons of water than all the motors do of coal? You see, the mine is warmer than the outdoors, so that it heats the air as it comes in, and that makes the air pick up water and carry it out. And by the same

token it brings it in during the summer, when the cooler air in the mine makes it stick on the mine roof in the drops you see."

Up in the main butts the air current is so strong that the big doors cannot be opened by the "trappers" to let the motors or the men pass unless they are made in a "V" shape, which requires only a half swing against the pressure.

As we worked all day to fix a regular and an emergency door, we felt that we were probably making life safer for all our other fellow-workers. Nearly everybody in the mines seem to have this idea of hang together or hang separately—or rather, play safe together or be blown up together. No digger here is allowed to endanger himself or his companions by the firing of his explosive. A "shot-firer" makes the rounds of each section, inspects the drilled hole, sees to its proper cleaning and charging, and then with his battery sets it off in safety with a powder which goes off with too much speed to ignite any possible gas.

Then, too, the daily output of coal depends on everybody's team-work. The loader must wait until the machine-cutters have undercut the face, and the shot-firer has made the coal cliff tumble to the floor. Then he must depend on the motor-man and his snapper to get the cars to him without his having to wait and loaf. Or if he's a "pick-man" he must have the help of the timber-man to make the place safe up to the last minute. It seems that a pick-man is one who gets his coal by taking out the "ribs" and "pillars" of coal which separate the different rooms and where the weight of the roof, after the rooms have been worked out, is such that the machine-cutter and explosives cannot be used; the coal would just sag down right onto the machine and the powder might bring the whole thing down! Even after the pick-men have worked wherever possible, it is the exceptional mine, I'm told, that does not find it cheaper to leave forty per cent of the coal still there rather than try

to get it out, after meeting all the safety and other regulations.

Perhaps this combined life-and-limb and dollars-and-cents necessity of team-work is accountable for the very good baseball game I saw to-night after supper. The other team came from the city, but was cleaned up by the mine boys in their handsome suits to the very high-class tune of two to one. The mine band also did some artistic work between innings. Such things do a lot of good where the work is only eight hours, and so leaves a lot of daylight between four and nine o'clock. If I can judge from the line of conversation of the boys, they are also big factors in improving the town's morals. Of course, good living conditions share with athletics in the credit for this. Also the reported disapproval of the higher-ups as shown by the occasional discharge of underofficials who become careless of their personal standing and influence.

I've been waiting to be invited to join the union—so far in vain. It costs about eighty cents a month, besides a ten-dollar initiation fee, all subtracted from your pay by the company.

I hear there was union discussion last night about striking because some of the socialistically inclined Russians were discharged, but the Americans prevailed. The workers seem to be, for the most part, very happy, their most serious trouble being that the slump in the steel business permits working the mines only three or four days a week.

"Where you work before you come here?" they all ask, whether down "inside" or above ground. "Ah!... Work steady dere? . . . Seex day? My G——! For why you queet dere coom here—work tree, four day week, huh? Five day—all right, fine; tree day—no can live."

I have to do some quick thinking to explain so unreasonable an action. Apparently the bane of the mines is this irregularity of operation. That seems to be due mainly

to the generally accepted impossibility of storing the coal at mine mouth—with, therefore, the necessity of stopping work the minute that either orders or cars run out. With comparatively few of the large customers doing much storage—they say that, roughly, one-third of all coal goes to the railroads, another third to the public utilities and the biggest industries, while of the final third only about a fourth goes to the domestic or household users!—the result is a markedly seasonal demand which piles up in such shape as to make a peak demand on the railways for cars which they cannot meet—with, accordingly, an idle mine resulting.

Many of the men seem to earn well over ten dollars a day, and a number load enough to get over twelve dollars, day after day, when they do work.

I asked a girl at the company store why all don't live better when they can earn such money. Both her parents are Russians, and she speaks several Slavic tongues—a bright, well-Americanized young lady.

"Why, you see, all those Slavic people—Russians, Poles, Croats, etc.—they all expect to go back to the old country some day, buy a nice little farm and take it easy. They don't really like this country unless they came here young, but they can make good money here. So they won't pay rent for a good house, and they make all the children go to work early—while they put the money in the bank for that little farm. That's what I hear 'em all talking about all the time. . . . Oh, those Russians that were arrested here yesterday as Bolshevists? Why, they'd go back peacefully to Russia and help their friends, only they believe that the government here will keep all their money, and it's their money they want to take over to help the cause. See?"

I understand passports are not being given to anybody to go back to Russia. I guess she's right about the older Slavic people. But when I asked a young chap I know if he was going back, I got very quickly his energetic "No!

For why?" One Russian was pointed out as having on deposit in the local savings-bank an account of $18,000!

It certainly looks like an enormous job to straighten out all the kinks in a population like this. . . . "No, you can't get any of these older people from Europe to learn English—only the young will do it." Misunderstandings and distrust are easy enough, goodness knows, even among well-understanding friends. To my surprise to-day a man who has been in this one mine over fifteen years said:

"Too many robbers in dees country. . . . Alla time steal. Man work to-day where alla time 'squeeze' break up floor or roof—he stay alive all right and come outside, and den some robber with gun take away all monee he get. . . . In olda time coal weigh good; so gooda man maka da gooda monee. Now coal no weigha good. . . . Check-weighman? Yes, he paid bya da union, but pocket always open for company and he forget hees buddies. Only one good check-weighman in hundred."

It certainly is too bad that a company which does so many fine big things should be thought—especially by an old employee—thus guilty of dishonesty. But I guess such distrust is general in industry—and generally because there isn't enough effort to establish mutual respect and confidence by each finding out what the other fellow's got in his head and heart.

Seeing the Russians go off with the federal officers yesterday reminds me of that Bolshevist Socialist meeting I attended in Steelville, celebrating "Debs Day." The woman who had presided at the Canton meeting where Debs made the speech for which he was imprisoned, was cheered when she said "People look now for peace not to Paris but to Moscow!" and "If the peace commissioners don't hurry, the Bolshevists won't give 'em their passports to come back here." Another said, "Just think, if Debs were free he'd talk to-day at *one* meeting. Now that our

enemies have been good enough to put him in jail, his ideas and ideals are being proclaimed to-day at 5,000 meetings like this." It was a bigger and livelier meeting than the first attended, but seemed to me unlikely to make much trouble.

Coaldale,
May 16.

Maybe some day I'll want to be a miner again, but if I do I'll have to break a vow I made several times to-day—that if the Lord would get me out alive I wouldn't bother him again to look after me any more in a coal-mine!

Was assigned to a stalwart, black-mustached timberman, named John. First we fixed up a temporary canvas stop where a brick wall is being built, so as to save the need of sending any more air through a portion of the mine which has now been worked out. Then we went into an entry where three pick-men were taking out the ribs and pillars—and where the floor was squeezing up so enthusiastically for a get-together party with the roof that there was hardly an unbroken timber in the place.

Our job was merely to take down the broken ones and put up good ones! As I stood under a particularly nasty piece of roof I cast my eye down past two or three broken upright posts till finally I saw a pair of good ones—and made a mental note to make a break to their protection if anything started to fall. Then to my huge dismay I saw that the reason that the uprights were good was that the cross-bar holding the roof was itself split and U-shaped.

Of course I tried to reason with myself that my buddy wasn't worrying and he'd been doing this work for ten years. But I didn't make a great hit with myself, I will say. And was partly right, too. For, at one time I protested to John that some top-coal was loose. A stroke or two of the pick failed to loosen it, but on my further protest, a third blow brought down about five tons

of it! I thought still more should be got down before I worked under it, but he assured me laughingly of its complete safety. For an hour or so I worked under it, and picked up what had fallen in order to clear the track for the few cars still to be loaded. Then we ate our dinners out of our buckets outside in the entry where the weight was less and the timbers sounder. Then we came back to the spot where I had been working, ready to go at it again. Two more tons had fallen!

As we dug and picked and pounded the new uprights and cross-bars into place, John, of course, told about various disasters and serious accidents, including the time the top-coal fell on him and broke his leg. Still I suppose one broken leg in eighteen years of mining (all in one mine!) is, on the whole, rather reassuring. Certainly the roof seemed to trouble him mighty little beyond an occasional thump to test its soundness, or a sharp stop to listen when slate fell, say, on the other side of the entry, where he was strenuously hammering a post into position. I take it he never heard the town minister tell what he told me last night:

"One time I had to give up going to an important national assembly of my denomination because word came that one of my best friends had been entombed in a big mine disaster. I was greatly shocked and immediately wrote the funeral sermon, but no telegram came setting the hour of the funeral. That was two years ago. They have been working on that disaster ever since. Last week I preached that sermon—the man's body had only just been recovered!"

(Incidentally, the minister said he knew little about the thoughts or the feelings of the town's miners outside the few foremen in his church. Furthermore, he doubted greatly if even the priest of the local Slavic churches did.)

My timberman is certainly a hard worker—and a conscientious one. We kept hard at it all day except for the regular short morning rest and bite out of our dinner-buckets at about nine. At twelve he queried:

"Buddie, wat you tink? If work now—no catch dinner—and put up posts, den dees 'Bolshevik' here (jovial for Russian) he no lose time and get one more car coal to-day. Wat say?"

So we delayed our dinner an hour and thus helped the digger's production by changing the cross-bar (and blocking the track) during the hour when the motorman would be eating his lunch, and so would not come along and have to leave the digger's full car to wait for the next trip. A first-class example of mine team-work.

Nature evidently takes a hand in this mine team-work, too. Before we finished our timbers, the pick-men in the entry had pretty well finished their ribs and pillars, and so began taking up their tracks. To-morrow they will deliberately saw the timbers supporting their roof, and with their amazing skill contrive to back out safely at just the last safe moment while the roof falls in. It seems that this will serve to lessen the weight of the roof on the place where we worked to-day, and so make it safer for the Russian to go ahead and get out the coal still available in his "rib." You can relieve roof pressure, so they say, by either putting up stronger supports in the room itself, or by "making a fall" in a near-by room or entry.

During the afternoon the section boss, a very reliable and intelligent man, came along, saw that everything was going properly, and with friendly words continued his rounds of the eighty-five or so men in his part of the mine. I hope he appreciates what a good man he has in my buddy. Anyway, I was warm in praising him whenever his very marked pride in his work led him to pause for breath in between strenuous blows and inquire:

"Dere, Buddee, wat you tink? Me good timber-man? Mebbee yes, mebbee no? Wat say?"

I didn't do a quarter of the work he did, but my shoulders found it one of the hardest days in the mine—and that in spite of the fact that, joy of joys, I had a "shower-bath" in the cellar to-night. I'm sure that lessens by at least a third a worker's fatigue after a day of hard, sweaty, dirty work.

John, like others of his kind, has handled almost every job in the mines. He reported a short period "outside," but showed not the slightest interest in any other field.

"Work one year steel car company—drive rivet—no like. Too much noise. Old man dere no got ears no more—no can hear."

To-night an American just ahead of me in the line, waiting to be "caged" up, testified: "Yep, thirty-seven years of it—mostly right here. Pumping now—mostly walking from one pump to the other. Get pretty tired. Nope, never tried nothin' else. Well, I don't know, guess 'twas because I was *afeard of the weather.*"

And to-night at supper a new boarder confessed: "No, I cudn't do nothin' else but mine—that is, and be happy. I tried it once—in a railroad yard. They was too many different kinds o' weather out there, so I come back."

Another boarder, Mike, is a former union organizer—also a former gambler. "I was gettin' too sure o' myself—too bold. I had to quit it, as a sort of safety-first proposition like, you know."

He tells many tales of disputes he's taken part in. As to the union's stand—or lack of it—in regard to living conditions:

"Well, I'll say we got enough to handle, with pay and hours and ventilation. And of course, you understand, in every big union there's lots o' *fractions.*"

I get the impression that the union meetings are mostly

run by the most aggressive, and that all the decisions come before the company officers as demands rather than requests or suggestions, whether in line with the signed agreement or not. The attractive pay and easy duties of the check-weighman evidently make trouble. I'm told he is changed often by the vote of the men, whose distrust is aroused by some one who feels that his cars are not being weighed fairly, and who is himself quite likely then to be elected to the job—only to be displaced in his turn by some other doubter of his honesty.

I'm positively sorry to be going away to-morrow, but I'm after steel rather than mine experience, and I hope it will now be possible to get a mill job. But I certainly have got a valuable side-light on the problem of the factory foreman. I recall how we used to agree in the sheet-mill that the foreman did not want to answer our questions for fear he'd lose his monopoly of the "know-how" and how on the open-hearth we usually learned things only by being cursed in everybody's presence when we made mistakes. No wonder these men here feel independent and self-respecting. Especially when the tonnage men can take their dinner-bucket and go "outside" and home at any hour they feel like it. Then, too, if they get tired loading, with its puff-hard-fill-car-take-easy method, they can easily get a chance to become skilled men at wiring or track-laying, timbering, etc. Still more important, once a year anybody can go to the county-seat and take an examination to become a fire-boss, and then a pit-boss, and so rise almost indefinitely. In other words, the State, as it were, furnishes in coal that pull-less promotion system which is felt by many workers to be so missing in many plants.

"I mind me o' Jo Smith," said mine host the other night; "'e couldn't even read when 'e was thirty. An' then 'e married a school-teacher, y' understand. And damned if she didn't up an' learn 'im to read. An' the first thing ye

know, 'ere 'e was a fire-boss. And then later, 'e gets ter be a pit-boss and superintender.—An' then one day they makes 'im manager an' president!"

At this the ex-union organizer and gambler exploded: "Don't it beat the dickens the way some fellows has all the luck!"

Altogether, it looks as though the independence of the worker, a proper day of eight hours with good pay, either according to your own efforts or to an agreed, liberal day-rate, with "alla time good air and no cold—no hot," justifies the country's miners in thinking highly of their work, their service, and therefore themselves as useful and self-respecting persons—altogether different from anything I would ever have supposed a few months ago.

It seems to me certain that the company is getting its money back on all these expenditures for better living conditions. And the workers seem to me a higher class, less given to booze and unreliability and irregularity, and so able to secure better production per man—also fewer accident claims—altogether a happier and more stable working force than under other circumstances. And that's the real test of any welfare or better-relation activities.

I wonder what's to be the next job.

Steelville again,
May 19.

The mine superintendent reported that I had proved his informal and voluntary secret service to be in prime working order; nearly a dozen foremen had 'phoned to suggest a close eye on me as a "fellow with a dark beard and a keen eye who certainly looks like a Bolshevik." Another citizen had reported me as taking notes at a ball game—I was signing a picture-postal. Another stated that she had seen me through an open window drawing maps in my bedroom, and, as I had been heard to speak a few words in German, I was undoubtedly a spy for the Huns!

At three o'clock in the morning of my last night in the town, my roommates, just getting in from their night shift, had said they knew I was a detective. Things looked close for a few moments, but I was able to reassure them of my interest in coal-mining and not in individuals—until with their fatigue they dropped off to sleep. At breakfast the landlady expressed the same suspicions but also seemed easily reassured.

That person, by the way, made a large hole in the earnings of a week. The wages of four days as "timber-man" were twenty dollars, minus some slight deductions for the electric safety-lamp (five cents per day), etc. With ten dollars out for board and room, it did not make one very enthusiastic about building a fortune.

At any rate, my second week of coal has shown that bad living conditions are not a necessity unless the coal-seam of the town or camp is extremely short-lived; also, I think, that money spent by the company in better surroundings brings good returns in better and more productive workers, as mentioned before. It also appears to me unquestionable that the miner's work carries him much closer to a genuine self-respect than does the steel-mill laborer's job. With this start the increase of it by any and all means would seem to bring good results in many ways. It also seems certain that in the limited opportunities of the camps the most outstanding way to indicate your standing is not to earn and spend as we do, but just not to earn, seeing that there is so little to do with the money.

That must be the reason why the operators claim that even when they have the orders and the needed cars, the difficulty is to get the miners to stay "inside" for a good day's and a good week's work. Where a man can show by his house or his flivver or by other of his possessions that he is "getting on," a very definite value is given to earning the wherewithal. But in a community where no house

can be bought—because the town may not be there a few years later—and where the roads may be too bad for a flivver, then the only other way of indicating the status of a self-respecting man who is "as good as the next one" would seem to be by that "conspicuous leisure" which is obtained, not in the ordinary way of working, earning, and then buying, but by not working—by walking out of the mine at two o'clock while some other chap is so much a dub of a worker that, in order to make a living, he has to stay in till the day is ended at four!

Work has been such that I've seen little of this, but it is hard to read any statement from the operators without running onto it.

At the mine the most serious moment of the day was at five o'clock. Then everybody began to listen and I wouldn't be surprised if many prayed. Finally the whistle would boom and re-echo from the sides of the valley: One—two—three! With that, the tension was over and everybody smiled. "Work to-morrow! Thank God!" But when it went only one—two! you saw men taking it pretty hard—running their hands through their hair and saying: "My God! How can live! What can do? No work to-morrow!"

And nobody seemed to know why.

"It's somethin' about steel!" said my landlord when I asked him for the cause of the two-blast days. He had been with the company all the ten years it has been owned by a steel company which must, of course, lower its coal-and-coke production the minute steel begins to slow up—when war contracts are called off and peace-time buyers hesitate in hopes of lower prices.

On the subject of the Bolshevists, by the way, I was interested to get the testimony of some federal-service men recently, like this:

"There are about 25,000 I. W. W.'s in the whole country. Their recent convention in Chicago brought only 54

delegates. It is likely they will shortly attempt to revive their propaganda for sabotage, stopped during the war. Personally, we believe the average employer is hysterical in his fear of what the radicals may do—though we tell all of them we see that the mailed-fist and machine-gun method is the worst possible way to stop it. Especially in this district there should be more effort to get better contacts with their men. . . .

"Such Russians as we arrested up there in your coal town the other day are not strictly Bolshevists. They are members of the 'Union of Russian Workmen,' which charges modest dues for teaching them to read and then makes philosophical anarchists and terrorists out of them. It has about 15,000 members and was organized in this country by the man who is now one of Trotsky's men—his chief of police in a big Russian city. These men are easily subject to deportation under federal law.

'Debs is a member of the Workmen's International Industrial Union, which may be called the left wing of the I. W. W. and the right wing of the Socialists—or vice versa. All of these are radical split-offs from the organized-labor movement. Some radicals, like Foster of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Plate Workers, are hoping to stay in conservative labor ranks, and by 'boring from within' convert it to radicalism or wreck it in the attempt. Employers definitely help such insidious plans when their 'labor policy' only means the hiring of secret-service men who proceed to beat up and drive out of town any agitators or other men who begin to show signs of a leadership that might later become troublesome. Such a 'labor policy' is entirely too common in the rougher industries. It may easily bring about the blowing-up of some of the plants of the worst employers and so start serious trouble."

The street-car strike here does not seem to be taken very

seriously. The paper this morning said many of the men were glad to get back to running the cars after the house-cleaning to which their wives had put them. To-night a waitress—after telling of her "going out to work at the age of eleven" (on account of nine children and a sick father)—recounted how a woman at her table a few days before had exclaimed:

"Well, I hope they strike. My man's a motorman, and I need him at home to beat some carpets."

A chat to-day with a Bohemian minister (Presbyterian) who has been in this country eight years brought out:

"Yes, I think many, many Slavic people will go back as soon as they can. Not many—hardly any—Bohemians and not many of the Slavs who are on farms. But of the Poles, Ruthenians and Ukrainians—they all are very nationalistic—many will go back; nearly one-fourth of the 600,000 Ruthenians, for instance. Whether they stay or not, that will depend on what they find. Personally, I think they expect to find too much, and I know many of their people want to come here. I think the country will suffer if they do not let them come—if they pass this anti-immigration bill in Congress. . . . Yes, we try to Americanize, but we never say that word—foreign people do not like it. And when we see some of our own children—often they are cleaner than American children—looked down upon as 'Hunkies,' I wish Americans would take some Americanization themselves. Yes, it is hard work, especially when Bohemians so generally go from Catholicism, not to Protestanism but to atheism."

Well, I'll agree with him to the point of feeling positively sorry not to see more of my rough and husky, but honest and friendly and likeable, Slavic buddies here in the mines, and they certainly are hard workers—a lot of us would certainly shiver if these chaps weren't in our midst!

"Rosvamesh po Polski?" (Do you speak Polish?)—is all

I know besides a few numerals, but even that seems to surprise them and make them more friendly.

And now to look around for another job. "No work" at the steel-mills gave me a chance to learn something of the reason for the spirit of freemasonry so noticeable among railway workers.

Steelville,
Decoration Day.

To-day I feel as though a worker ought to ask, "Where am I going to live?" before expressing a preference for an eight-hour-day job. Of course, the hourly rate is more important because it practically tells him where he may live. But just now I feel almost as though I'd prefer longer hours at the same money because the longer day in the plant would mean a shorter day in the less pleasant surroundings of the boarding-house.

I don't imagine many workers would figure it out just that way, for I'm simply suffering from the accumulated dirtiness and misery of several days and nights here in the slums. At any rate, I can now appreciate better than before the view-point of a man who walks past an eight-hour job and takes a ten and twelve hour one that doesn't pay any very great amount more. He figures on two things: he can buy somewhat better living accommodations—*and then he won't have to stay in them so long.*

All this quite surely has something to do with the difficulty of getting the work done, and done well, there in the railroad roundhouse where I now have the title of "machinist's helper." With all the rules enforcing strictly the eight-hour day, my forty-five cents an hour as a helper brings three dollars and sixty cents. Figure this with the cost of existing and the excessive grease and grime of helping to fix engines, and it gives a reason for my Polish machinist's apparently frequent lack of a helper, and his anxiety to treat me well my first day. At the same time he wasn't at all happy in his own work, though he gets fifty-seven cents and can work up to sixty-eight.

"Thees one debil of job—alla time dirt, sweat, grease. But to-day we take eesy so mebbe you come back to-morrow," he explained as soon as I was turned over to him by the foreman. A moment later he apologized for having to ask me to crawl along with him down into the pit beneath one of the monster engines:

"Watch yourself—mebbe no get-'em grease. Last week new buddy he get-'em grease and straight he queet. Nobody like-'em dees work. Good man he no stay."

After we had got out the heavy eccentric rods and carried them to the blacksmith shop we "took a blow" and he showed me the store-rooms, machine-shop, etc.

"Dees place you come for get-'em tool. Me want you like job—stay be my buddy."

Others called to me not to worry when I showed signs of wanting to keep busy when he left me for a time; as near as I can make out, the general motto is, "Don't kill yourself!"

After several days of it, it looks as though the trouble is that the wages for the eight hours are generally found too small to hold a man unless he can take it as easy as the work will at all permit. When, day before yesterday, I was changed to a different job, my new buddy, a young American, took a great deal of time to assure me that "There's nothing to it, Charlie. It's a cinch—most o' the time waitin' around for your signal when they want you. It's dead easy—you'll like it fine!"

I was quite proud to learn that my signal would be the one long blast, which I had supposed was for some very important chap. So I took great pride in hopping off to report in answer to its summons—much to his disgust. When later I came in from strenuously scrubbing the headlights on top of the big hot engines, the boys exclaimed, "Say, you ain't supposed to *sweat* on that job!"

This listless attitude is usual for unskilled labor, but not

for skilled and semi-skilled men. Another factor is undoubtedly that the union, which took advantage of government and the war-time ban on opposition to unions to grow strong, is apparently now discounting somewhat the company's control of its men. Still another factor is the absence of the "swing-shift."

Instead of the men's working one week or one month on the first shift or trick from seven to three, daylight, changing the following week to the evening shift, and then to the night shift, as is common, for instance, in the hot-mills of steel-rolling plants, here a man's length of service gives him his choice to have and to hold the whole year round. The day shift is, of course, the most popular. Next, strangely enough, is the third or night "trick." The worst of the three, and the one where every new man must perforce begin, is the second—three to eleven P. M. This order of choice makes one more proof of the fundamental I keep running up against—that everybody wants to be a near-normal human being in addition to being a worker.

"Why, I can't call on my girl without gettin' a lay-off to do it—and that costs me a day's wages before we start! Sunday?—why, you've got to get a lay-off for Sundays and holidays just like any other day, and you'd better not get too blooming many of 'em, either.

"Union? I don't know nothin' about what they do. We second-trick fellows can't never go to the meetings—no, nor to the movies, nor anything else.

"Of course, we have our mornings and we can eat dinner with the wife and mebbe the kids, and we can garden—but what's the use? Why, say, I've got a fine suit at home—bought it over five years ago. Swell! But do you suppose I can wear it out and get a new one? I should say not! No chance as long as I'm stuck on this —— second trick!"

Then, too, there's the union regulation which, as reported

to me, says that no helper can be advanced to machinist unless he started as *helper before he was twenty-five.*

"You twenty-five? Come here?—you fit for nothing except for kill," explained my Emil that first day.

Of course such a rule closes the door for many, and so, theoretically, makes the chances greater for the others. But with forty-five cents and eight hours for the start, and the final limit of sixty-eight cents on the second shift until years and deaths bring the third or the first—well, that's surely another reason for the round-house's lack of interested workers.

At the pace taken the work is not exhausting, and would be much less so if only the hammer, sledge, or wrench did not have to be handled in such outlandish positions. The locomotive apparently still is where the automobile was a dozen and more years ago, when that joke started about the insane motorist tinkering with the slats of his asylum-bed—a story which was shortly killed by making the motor get-at-able from the top. Even after standing in a four-foot pit you're likely to wear scabs on your head for some time—and to avoid the grease is apparently impossible even for the most experienced.

Still, I can hardly imagine any man who was once a boy who wouldn't be glad to crawl under and over and into the giant engines. They *look* power. They *feel* power as you pound their steel "innards." They breathe power as they pant. They spell power, even when the dinkey, or "goose," as it's called, pushes them about after their fire-box is cold. You feel yourself absorbing strength just as does the groom of the giant—and you wish yourself in the engineer's seat with your hand on the throttle, driving the monster, whose nose is plunging on forty-five or fifty feet in front of your controlling fingers.

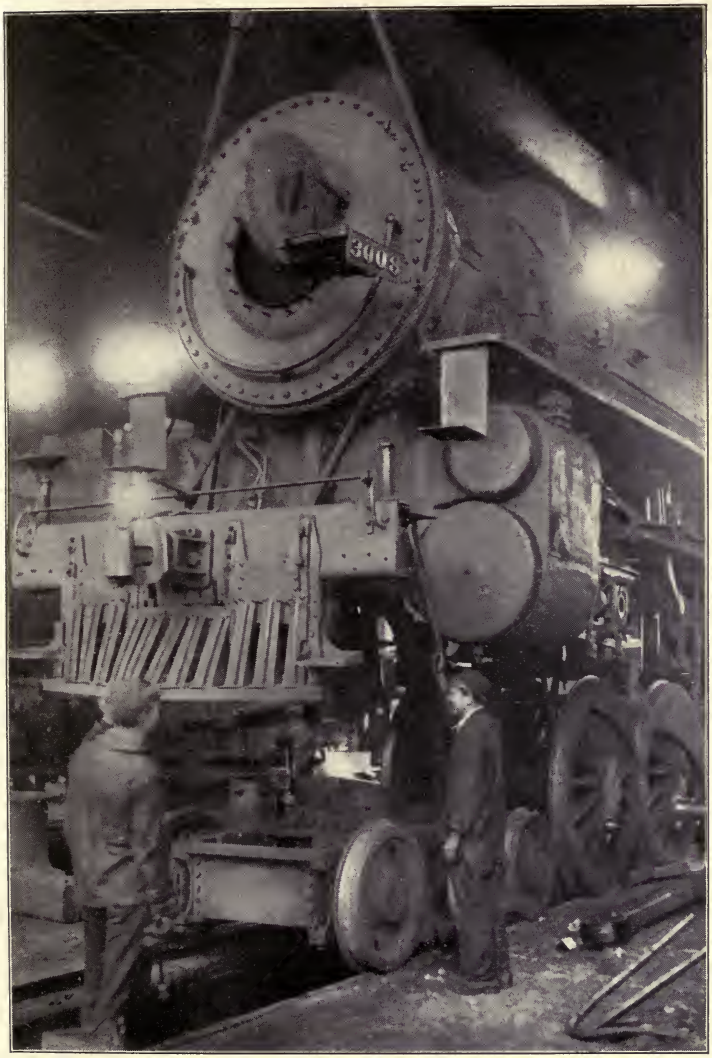
So I have enjoyed the work in spite of all the bumps and the grime and the injunctions to "Take it easy!" And, as

I started out to say at the beginning, I'd be tickled if I could stay there in "the house" or "the yard" more and here in my room less.

At three dollars and sixty cents a day a fellow's got to watch corners. By staying near-by I could cut out the street-car. No room is to be had, even here in this neighborhood, for much if any less than three dollars a week. The cheapest board I've met is a twenty-one meal-ticket for six dollars and fifty cents. Bing! there goes almost one dollar and fifty cents out of that three dollars and sixty cents! You can't work without canvas gloves at twenty-five cents per, and if you don't disgrace your buddies you've got to pay for a lot of washing. With all that, you're only alive and physically able to work—provided you have better luck than I did when I took my present quarters. For every day here I feel too tired to work hard.

The front rooms I saw were too noisy. This one is at the rear. Its drawback is that the other roomers have to pass through it to the bathroom.

"But Oi hev only wan or two others besides yorself, sor, and Oi'm certain, sor, ye'll not mind it at all, at all," the landlady of about sixty-five assured me. I inspected the bathroom and felt that an ex-roomer who happened to be on hand was probably right in saying the old lady was clean and honest. But I guess I'm a poor inspector: I failed to notice that the bathroom has no ventilation whatever except through what is now my room! My window looks out on a little court about ten by twenty feet, formed by alley-houses, whose back steps are covered with colored people and bulwarked by garbage-cans. Just around the court's corner is a stable with about fifty horses and numerous colored hostlers, whose noisy labors continue far into the night. The wind seems often to set from that direction for carrying both noise and odor. Ditto for the blacksmith-shop just beyond.



Courtesy of the New York Central Railroad

A FREIGHT ENGINE LIFTED BY A CRANE

Part of the dignity and satisfaction of the worker's life comes from his familiar association with and control of great power

Carpets seem to be often beaten in my court—and very dirty ones, too. But even then, if the wind is blowing the dust down the alley, I dislike to be awakened by the landlady coming in to close my window and so shut off both the dirt and the outside air from my room—my bath-bedroom!

I must say the colored people seem to be happy—I find myself chuckling occasionally even now in the midst of my Decoration Day case of "slum slumps," in unison with one neighbor of a very infectious laugh.

"No, sor," says my housekeeper, "they don't use as bad language as lots o' them as thinks theirselves their betters. Oi must say as they've had raisin'—good raisin'!

"That piano-player? Well, sor, now thot's from a house thot's not so good. Ye'll be after understandin' me, sor—it's not a nice place. But still, they run it respectable-like, and Oi must say some o' thim colored women Oi see come out o' there do look like real ladies, if Oi do say it."

Well, is it any wonder—with no movies to go to because it's morning, no offices nor stores nor public baths nor libraries to look into because it's a holiday, no bed made because some of the roomers aren't up yet after their night shift, and nothing to do but go around in the neighboring alleys and see thousands of negroes and Slavic folk in shirt-sleeves or night-gowns and kimonos crowded on their sidewalks or court-porches and steps, with glimpses of front rooms chuck-full of beds and cribs and dinner-tables and stoves and pink-and-red-tinselled shrines and chromos, is it any wonder that I find it hard to think to-day of those who fell at Gettysburg or Cantigny! These people are the soldiers of our modern industry. They aren't under the sod, but many of them are maimed in their fight in the trenches of production, and many of them are a lot like the discouraged colored boy I heard telling his friend in the employment-office hallway last winter when jobs were scarcer than now:

"Well, Ah don't calls it livin'; Ah'm just existin';—and with one o' my feet down to'rds the cold clay and the rough-box—and me likely to slip if Ah doan' mind my step mighty sharp like."

Of course I suppose it's right to assume that my Slavic and colored friends are not as bothered by bathroom-stable smells as I am, but they must wake up just as often as I do when people pass through their room or when the whole family is in with them. And then, too, I'm sure they are driven more surely than I—though perhaps less consciously—to the companionship of the saloon or the place of the player-piano (though on this score of music, I must say that a great number of the crowded tumble-downs I saw this morning had victrolas and player-pianos going gayly). In fact, I'll warrant the whole outfit of them will feel quite as little like doing a good day's work in the mill or the round-house as I will when I register this afternoon at three.

Just who's to blame for such a dreadful district I don't know. But with these few days added to the coal-camp, I'm surer than ever that the employer has an interest in the living conditions of his workers that is a long way from philanthropic. Of course, as long as even such places represent home, with all its associations and intimacies, they and the changing of them will have to be handled with the kid gloves of diplomacy.

Emil assures me that most of his friends are going back "to auld country just so soon as they can, so can live on farm in nice place." If that's true, the resultant labor shortage will present to industry a large bill in the form of higher wages. It is to be hoped that some of this income is to be used for better houses—provided this city can see the wisdom of burning up such as these around me and get others built.

Ugh! I guess I'll go out and take a walk and try to find

a clean restaurant for dinner so as to get into better shape for the work on those handsome steel engine chaps.

Later.—I hate to think of the low-down—the vile—conversation I had to overhear last night between the old landlady and one of the roomers, or the goings on I had to witness in a neighboring apartment, but it was only in line with all the other things to be seen and heard on all sides in this locality.

Hotel de Bath-Bed-Room,
June 1st.

There is, somehow, a thrill about working with engines —especially the live ones that go out from your hand and get groomed into shape to run down to the station for their job of hauling the politician to the governor's office at B——, or the worried husband to his sick wife or baby up at "The Junction"—all the actors in "this pleasing, anxious being" called life.

Last night I caught this thrill from the inspector, who was extremely proud of his responsibility. With him I helped test every one of the more important and accessible nuts and bolts and pins and bearings that spell speed and safety to the engineer and all his protégés:

"You see, if I fall down on my job, there's the devil to pay and maybe scores of lives lost (tap, tap on the piston-pin). If they pull into A—— even fifteen minutes late because this here works loose (tap, tap on the dowel-pin on the eccentric or the valve-stem) it gets right back to me, you understand. Now this here is the power for Train No. ——, which is one of the fastest and best on the line. And the engineer!—Well, I'll say he's some particular guy. In an hour you'll see him out here goin' over all this just as if you and me was dead. . . . And you've got to know the name of every blamed bolt and screw—or how can you tell the boss what's wrong? . . . Whew! Say, look here!

That spring's got all them leaves busted. Wow! We'll have to report that, and if the boss don't 'shop' her for repairs they won't have anything on me, anyway."

His pride was refreshing. It was a sight, though, to see how it offended my Emil, who as a machinist had taken these very engines apart and put 'em together again, and so felt he did not need to be urged so strenuously to "Keep your eyes open there, Shorty! This is serious business." All during the shift they growled alternately into my ear, each about the other, each defending his own knowledge and its value and sufficiency to the occasion.

Occasionally we had to stop and do some fixing before we could report "O. K." As we worked, the "hard-grease" man was filling the cups on the main rod or the side bar, which together carry the motion from piston-head to drive-wheel. Or perhaps the "air men" were seeing to the brakes, while still others were making sure that water and steam and fire were in good condition.

Then would come along the tracks a well-dressed man in a pressed suit and a new straw hat, carrying a suit-case, looking like—well, like a member of the town school board.

"Where's 7978?"

"Right there, sir, second ahead."

He was the engineer. Up he'd mount and pretty soon be down in his newly washed and ironed overalls and jumper, cap with goggles, handkerchief over his white collar, and oil-can in hand, going over it all again as though we had never been born!

He's the king of the round-house—the prince of the yard. When he takes the throttle to move out in his turn, and whistles three blasts for the switch to take him to his train in the big station, everything is supposed to be in readiness for him, even down to the tools and the drinking-water in the iron cupboard. And when he comes back to the yard from his run, he turns his engine over to the

"hostler," who sees to driving it to all the places where it dumps its ashes, gets its water, and receives the other attentions required for the next trip.

From his look the engineer seems to deserve the dignity he enjoys. Usually, so they tell me, he has had to be fireman for ten or more years before his chance came. So he's no casual worker; he's an expert in a place where lack of experience may mean death for him and many others. By his union with the others of his group throughout the country he has secured recognition of his importance. From the information to be picked up in the yards and the "house," his earnings are much below the figures generally understood. That eight-hour restriction practically means work only every other day—a run and return usually constitute a double turn one day and so require a loaf the next day. For this he gets from thirty-five to fifty dollars a week. This can hardly be felt too liberal, considering the responsibility, the skill, the dirt, and the danger—also those long years of hard shovelling as a fireman at pay little above labor rates.

"First, ye're on the 'extra' list as a fireman, y' understand? And it may be a long time before ye get a reg'lar run. Then after a few years, when ye think ye're going to cop out a boost, along comes some guy you never heard of, mebbe from some other division entirely, and gets it because he got in mebbe two days ahead of ye, eight years ago! And so ye wait another year or two," said one who had finally given up his place in order to become a machinist.

It seems to me highly proper that the engineer's job has come to have the dignity it has—whether by his own efforts or otherwise. It puts a bigger, abler, and more dependable man in charge of us travellers. Without that, all the tap-tappings of my friend the inspector, and the attentions of all the others in the house and the yard would be pretty fruitless, as well as all the precautions taken after the

huge, panting "X-4" is coupled up to the Pullmans in the station.

I wonder, by the way, if most of us realize that while we're getting on board, the station "air man" is getting up into the engine to "set the air." Then he walks the length of the train to see that every brake is set as it should be. From the rear platform he signals his O. K., whereat the engineer releases the brakes. Then he walks forward to see that every wheel is free—finally reporting in familiar manner but with military care, "She's O. K., Jim. Go to it!" Thereupon Jim is likely to say to the conductor just outside with a watch in his hand which has been compared with the engineer's, "You may fire when ready, there, I'm 'all set.'" At this the conductor steps on a trip which passes up to the despatcher's office the signal, "Ready"—and watches for the light which means "Go." On the instant of its appearing he calls or signals to the engineer, who opens the throttle while brakemen and porters grasp steps and doors—and the safe and comfortable conquering of space begins!

Since returning to ordinary pursuits, opportunity has been taken to travel in the cab and see what happens after the engineer says, with his two short blasts, "We're off!"

The first surprise was the fireman. Viewed from down on the ground, his responsibilities look simple if not exactly easy—so much coal into the fire-box for so many miles at such and such a speed. He doesn't seem to view it that way.

"See the driver over there? Well, of course, he thinks he's the whole party around here. In a way he is, but, believe me, he wouldn't get very far from the station if I wasn't here to get him a nice fire goin'!" In such wise the knight of the shovel and the poker whispered into my ear a large part of the way when he was not busy—which wasn't very much.

"Wait till I get her goin' good and then you can try her out a bit if you like. . . . Now we got an easy stretch. Here y'are. Now lemme look." Business of holding his shovel so as to see the spots in the bed of coal showing black through the blaze—black because burnt out. "Yes, give her three on each side and two in the middle-forward. Twist your shovel with your wrist as you let go. One foot like this on the apron here from the tender, the other in the cab, and your back against the partition so you don't fall out. Leave your body loose-like, so you can get a good swing. There, now! Watch till you get a 'black stack' —dark smoke.

"Now that's too bad! That steam-gauge sure 'nough is walkin' back on you! Here, lemme have it. If the coal gets too thin in places we'll go in late, sure as shootin'. . . . Ah, there she comes up again. We're all right! . . . Yes, you see an engine's all-fired temperamental—you have to study her—she always wants coal when she wants it—and *where—exact.* I've always said you can easy fool a fellow human, but, believe me, you've got to go some to fool a fire!"

In between times it was something doing every instant. In the towns the blower had to be turned on for the forced draft—or the fire-door opened—and then readjusted when the engine was supplying all the draft needed. Or the pick had to be taken to break up the lumps pressing against the gate that barred the coal's coming onto the apron for the shovel.

At nearly all times both engineer and fireman had to keep alert to "pick up" the signals. On the day trip, the fireman would call across the cab "Fair block!" and the engineer, with a wave of his canvas-gauntletted hand, would repeat it. By night the call would be, perhaps, "Green high!" and on we'd go. When it was "Yellow low!" the throttle would move back a bit, for the yellow's meaning is

that "the next block is one you must not run past. At this moment it is set against you. Get your train under good control." Wonderful eyes for lights and color they both seemed to have!

"It's a bad go when the fog makes the lights practically invisible," says the engineer when you sit over behind him on his narrower seat. "One day I remember running slow and looking up for the signal through a thick paste of a fog—and ran past a brakeman trying to stop me down there from the ground. Killed three of the boys in the caboose I smashed into.

"On one run—from Jersey City to Washington—the engineer and the fireman have to pick up in four hours and forty minutes—279 miles—a total of 648 signals—and they get laid off if they miss a one! . . . No, you mustn't take it too easy when the fog's bad, or the despatcher's likely to say when you get in late, 'Why, what's eatin' at you? There wasn't no fog in *here!*' They seem to have mighty little fog in the despatcher's office.

"Strike! Not us engineers! What could *we* do if we was beaten? The roadmen and the switchmen—that's different. They've been wanting—and deserving—a raise this long time. Whether they win or lose they can get *their* kind of job at ordinary unskilled labor anywhere."

All this care helps the engineer to realize his responsibility, and that responsibility, when reinforced by exceptional wages and hours and conditions, spells dignity of work, which in turns spells dignity of worker and therefore consideration and safety for the public he serves.

Things industrial would certainly be a lot better if more workers could have more of a chance to feel this dignity of the job—the way the engineer and the coal-miner do. But from what I've seen so far, there's a big crowd of foremen who have the idea that whatever dignity there may be in

the job belongs to them—and they'll be hanged before they'll let anybody else have any of it if call-downs and curses and proddings can keep them out of it. I'm sure that a different kind of foreman and more careful study of the different jobs, together with a friendly teaching of these revised jobs, would make a big change, because I'm sure most of the workers are surprisingly anxious to feel their job important and respectable. For instance, only last night I suffered from a machinist's anxiety on this score:

"I'm ten years here and nobody ever saw my face dirty" (looking at me very pointedly), "and I work as hard as anybody in the 'house.' But a machinist don't have to look like a coal-heaver, and shouldn't—and *wouldn't*, if he never wipes his face with his glove, just as I seen *you* do a minute ago. Use your handkerchief."

Of course among *un*skilled workers handkerchiefs are not good form, though I've had to use them occasionally covertly for fear my lack of skill in doing without them—as, for instance, in blowing my nose—would give me away.

Dignity is generally assumed to be given a job by tonnage or piece rates of pay. A machinist last night seemed to think otherwise:

"Yes, there's plenty of loafing now that we're all on day rates. But there was twice as much when we were on piece rates—only *that* loafing didn't cost the company anything; we just waited around to get a chance at some job; only on special rush times were all of us busy. But the company didn't save very much at that, either. Because when we did get a job, 'course we tried pretty hard to make it a *big* one. We'd maybe see that several other things ought to be done to the engine besides the things called for on the card—and the foreman or the 'super,' he didn't take the time to check up too carefully; and besides it was a matter of opinion. So a thirty-cent job might be made into a two-dollar proposition—and besides helping the ma-

chinists that would make a better showing of work done for everybody all up the line, from the foreman to the 'super' himself. And another thing—now here's this throttle valve, it's the most important thing in an engine. The piece rate used to be $1.80, so of course everybody would hustle to finish it in not more than three hours. So he could keep himself a sixty-cent man, see? And then everybody else on day rates would have to work two or three more hours to put it in and make it do even for a short time. Now to-night I've spent *six* hours on it. Look how careful I've been! I'm proud of it. It won't take fifteen minutes for the other fellow to get it in operation, and it will last a lot longer than any three-hour job. . . . Yes, I'm loafing just now. Over there on my bench is another job like the one I just finished, and I'm sure it's for me, all right. But, believe me, if I should get busy on it, the foreman 'ud come along pretty soon and say, 'Hey there! Who'n the devil's givin' out the work in this place, you or me?' So I'll let it lie, wouldn't you? Got a cigarette? Thanks. Drop along again."

Another machinist near him, by the way—and a handsome, clean-overalled and clean-faced fellow he is—has taken various fly-outs into other lines of work, Pullman conductoring, for instance.

"It ain't so bad except that you can't ever plan on anything. You never know where you're going to be. Perhaps even four minutes before your train starts and you have all your tickets in, you're changed to take somebody else's run. And then when you get there you may be sent two or three other places before you get back home. I'd rather be here at my lathe and know that the chances are good for being home to-night and here to-morrow."

In the steel-mills it was surprising to find the number of different jobs even the youngest workers seemed to have had. Here, as in coal-mining, it's surprising to find the

number who have been around the place six, eight, ten, twenty, and more years. The rule of seniority is probably a big factor—and, of course those working on the first and third, or more desirable, shifts probably average still longer. One of the helpers has just been a blacksmith—and a victim of this motor age:

"Well, ye see, all me materials wuz goin' higher, me labor wuz costin' me more'n more—'n all the time hosses wuz gettin' scarcer'n scarcer. So I sold out in August. But this work is too dirty. I can't see it—not yet, anyways."

Perhaps he hasn't yet learned to use his handkerchief any better than I have—so that when he does he'll be very contented. If the French philosopher is right—"By the work you know the workman"—he'll also be happier when he gets to be machinist instead of helper. Still there are obstacles there. One is that he became a helper in his forty-fifth instead of his twenty-fifth year, and the union rule says he can't become a machinist.

But it's time to get ready to go to work—which, by the way, means, because of the scarcity of roundhouse lockers, a rather depressing walk of several blocks in greasy work-clothes past the corner loafers, who nudge each other as I go by.

Hotel de Bath-Bed-Room,
Monday, June 2d.

An expert has said that steel and iron are recovering. So I have asked for my "time" and am just about to start off in hopes of a job somewhere in the land of ingots, billets, and bars.

At the present moment my strongest idea—or maybe it's more of a *feeling*, and a sore one at that—is that, judging from some of my experiences, a man is supposed to be grateful if he's given a job and then, after performing this service with the sweat of his brow—and his back—he's supposed to be equally grateful for being given the money due him!

At one time not many weeks ago the company where I was working owed me about seventy-five dollars for three weeks' work, while the one I had left owed me about the same amount. Of course, this is mainly because the pay at pay-day is the money earned, not in the period *ending* in the pay-day but in the two weeks *preceding that.* In some cases the pay-day follows the pay-period by a shorter interval, as ten days or, in some cases, one week.

To-day, when I went back to the roundhouse to get my money, I was asked *very* curtly if I didn't know the rule. Of course I didn't, because nobody had told me a single rule of any kind except the informal one called to me as a beginner by most of my new acquaintances—"Take it easy. Don't kill yourself!"

"Well, you oughta know we require ten days' notice," the clerk or paymaster, whoever he was, said.

"But I don't want to stay any longer."

"Well, you'll have to come here in person Friday."

"But I want to be in another part of the State Friday, and I've already lost to-day's work in order to come here for it this morning."

"Well, we can send it to you, but that has to go through the P—— office, and it'll take a long time. Maybe we can fix it Friday if you'll send somebody, properly authorized."

So I have tc ask *somebody else* to take time off to get the money due me.

I know, of course, the impossibility of giving a worker his full money up to any minute he chooses to throw down his tools. I know too how such action may easily persuade too frequent sudden quits when money becomes tight in the worker's affairs—with a rehiring, probably, of the same worker a day or so later. It is doubtless a necessary rule, but it should certainly be explained to the worker. And it should not be made the excuse for a surliness which all but makes the worker think that his employer is going

to give him his money at some convenient day only because he hates to see people starving 'round the place! That idea occurs, I'm sure, a lot of times, because the paymaster so often seems to feel that he serves his employer best when he makes his lead-pencil sharpest and saves time by delivering ultimatums instead of explanations through that nasty little hole in the glass window—ultimatums which blot out many earlier pleasant impressions the worker may have been about to carry with him. The effect of a lot of nice welfare near-luxuries can be cancelled in an instant by one growly paymaster; for he hands out the necessity of life.

It was in the same office of this unsympathetic refuser of my money that the railway company first expressed the assumption that of course the money was all I or anybody else was working for anyhow. After having been properly examined the day before and accepted into the benefit society—and he was an exceptionally courteous doctor, who explained the different benefits and examined me mainly for lungs and hernia—I had reported early at the office of this paymaster chap. I waited considerably after the beginning of my shift and finally asked very diffidently of the clerks in general if somebody was going to put me to work. A young lady shifted her gum and interrupted her conversation with the young man whose desk was quite noticeably within hand's reach, long enough to counsel:

"You should worry—you're gettin' paid for this all right."

Perhaps it is this higher-up tightness on money, and this same higher-up idea that money is all the worker wants, that help to that "Don't kill yourself!" propaganda.

In that connection, too, a lessening of responsibility and therefore of interest, all up and down the line, has certainly come from government operation. That's too big a question to discuss here, but all the higher-ups are undoubtedly

feeling that the many decisions made for them in Washington have lessened their responsibility, with a "We should worry" policy becoming easily the thing everywhere.

Whatever the cause, it's a certainty that the morale of the crowd is low. Of course a lot of the specific and acute unhappinesses a fellow runs across among the men go back to no big underlying cause, though every one of these leaves its little sore spot. Each sore spot, when added to by another and another, becomes in turn a centre of serious infection. It is doubtless impossible to prevent these entirely, but it does look as though just that has got to be the constant aim and effort of everybody up and down the line all the time. For instance:

"That's just the way I get it in the neck around this place all the time!" said a boy who had asked to have a chance at another's job when that chap was off on Decoration Day, and was told it had been given to another applicant. "These guys think just because I'm regular and not gettin' off every other day that I'm in love with this job o' mine. So they hand me any kind of a raw deal and think I'll stand for it. Believe me, if this happens again, I'm going to blow (leave)! And right from now on I'm going to take it easier, so they'll do a little more worryin' about holdin' me like they do some of these other stiffs around here!"

And this from an engineer:

"Why, sure, I'm wet—wet all over. And you'd be wet too if you'd fallen into a pit full of water like I did a minute ago lookin' for my engine. . . . *Sure*, there was no light! Could I drive an engine if I was blind? . . . But what do *they* care? *They* don't have to walk around the yard, so *they* should worry. . . . Oh, I'll get dried off someway, but take my word, somebody'll hear about this, all right!"

One way the boss "hears from it"—without knowing he's hearing from it—is in that "Don't kill yourself" or

"What's the difference? To h—— with it." If the boss doesn't care enough to prevent these mishaps to the worker, the worker can't curse the foreman without getting fired; his only come-back is, therefore, to be careless about the job. For, after all, the boss depends for his stand-in on his record of the work accomplished for the company, as every worker jolly well knows.

"Watch yourself. Here comes the boss!" is at any moment likely to throw a group of temporary loafers into various stages of apparent strenuousness. Or a beginner is likely to be exhorted:

"Hey there! For the love o' Mike, don't sit down to rest *there!* Get down under that engine or behind the fence, or I'll get in bad when the boss comes along and asks why I ain't keepin' you busy."

But I guess neither boss nor worker is to blame entirely —and each is getting about what he deserves. They just haven't got together to work out the mighty difficult problem of making things run smoothly and happily and efficiently. Anyway, everybody I've come onto here is a good fellow—fair-minded and decent—yes, I'd say unusually clean-minded, too. Nobody is for upsetting things generally. About the only growl I heard come from a group of men, outside the usual H. C. L. and the deprivations of the second shift, was good-natured wonderings when the union officers were going to get down to business during their sessions in Washington and make a report on a number of points under serious discussion.

After I told my "gang leader" I wanted to quit, the news spread and pretty soon some of my buddies were asking me embarrassing questions.

"Why you queet? . . ." "Where do you go from here?" etc.

I tried to dodge my Emil's bold "How much you make when insurance salesman before war knocked you out?"

No use, he kept after me. I had to think fast. If I gave too small a figure he'd say I didn't talk (in spite of all my efforts at bad grammar) like a man that earned so little. Still I mustn't give too big a sum.

"Well," I said, "one year I remember makin' a little over $2,000!"

It was all off. The sum was too large. The attitude of Emil and the others changed immediately. "Oh!" said he, "putty soon you get beeg job. Den you send for me—for good machinist."

When later we drank a glass together I tried to re-establish myself as his helper, but to one who gets fifty-seven cents for each of eight hours, and has to work seven days a week to get thirty-two dollars—and he only works every other Sunday or so—the earner of even an occasional $2,000 is out of his class. Still, it's pretty sure he would have known I was a liar if I had named, say, $1,200.

Somehow my quitting always seems to be taken as a sign—usually the first sign—that something's phoney about me as an honest-to-goodness working man. That's odd, because in many places other men are quitting—or at least just dropping out of sight. Maybe they just don't come back—and so avoid those questions about the future which seem to lead to others about the past. But nothing at all troublesome has happened so far, and the main thing is that while I've been on the job everybody has been friendly and frank, and treated me as the buddy I've tried to be.

I'm sorry to be leaving the railroad work without helping to push one of those big engines. But the boys tell me not to feel too bad about it. "Say, on a good hot day goin' up a hill, I'll tell the world a fellow's got to sweat some to keep her coaled up! And you have to watch you don't get thrown out goin' round a curve, too."

Well, so long to the roundhouse and here goes for the

open-hearth or the hot-mill—less grease but a lot more sweat! But grease or no grease, I think I love every eccentric-rod and every dowel-pin of those handsome, big, dignified giants of steel and steam.

CHAPTER VI

THE CIRCLE OF THE HIRING-GATES

It seemed desirable to know conditions over a broad field, even though that meant fairly frequent changes and more railway travel than the usual unskilled laborer would feel free to buy or willing to steal. In some cases it was evident that a newcomer was distrusted as an unstable floater. In others it seemed to be desirable to keep any kind of a worker around against the later possibility of needing him badly.

Irontown,
Wednesday, June 4.

It doesn't seem to be any joke—this trying to get a job in a steel-mill. Evidently it's going to take several more weeks for the business to come back enough to please the workers who were laid off shortly after the armistice.

At one time yesterday the employment manager—or one of his clerks—was courteous enough, but helpless.

"You see, we've got thousands that have been laid off for weeks. We're trying to take them back as fast as we can. Some of those on the benches out there now we're putting on again to-night. You might stick around for a while and maybe we can place you."

The white-coated doctor also made it look like a nice place to work, though the plant itself is far from pleasant in appearance. But, as often before, the policeman spoiled the impression. If he didn't have a whip in his hand or in his voice, he certainly did in his manner. He was letting a group of workers, mostly foreign-born, into the waiting-room, and when I asked if they were "takin' men on," he

simply motioned me to get in line. As they all had paper slips I thought I was getting into the wrong pew, but there was nothing to do except to follow his growls of injunction to the bunch:

"Fill up them benches there!"

"Everybody keep in his turn!"

I felt still more out of place when a clerk read certain names and numbers, but finally went in when my turn came—while the policeman sat and watched the crowd as if they were so many western steers.

In the streets the talk from such as firemen and truck-drivers, bar-tenders and mill-workers, ran:

"Sure, they shut down—that is, almost. The men was gettin' organized strong. Just about the time they begin to think of talkin' turkey to the company, along comes the company and puts the whole plant on less'n half-time.

"Why, we've got well over half of all the men in the plant in the union, and we're ready to go out any time our higher-ups will let us, and, believe me, we'll show the managers somethin'."

"Da low men dey wan' a beeg pay. Dey joina da union. Da beega pay fellers dey no like, and da beega company men dey no like. I tink no go."

At another big establishment several hours down the line it was the same story: "We're trying to take our old men back as fast as the return of business will let us—and there are 2,000 of 'em off. But you might stick around. You never can tell."

There was no policeman to spoil the picture, but the only worker I talked with was far from happy.

"This? I'll tell you straight. This is a scab-hole! We're gettin' the worst of it for fair—workin' us only eight hours at thirty-six cents! And they ain't yet come through with the back pay the arbitration committee awarded us. They owe me over $170 on it this minute. But I'll prob-

ably never see it. . . . Naw, they won't join no union; they're all after every other feller's job."

At another gate some scores of miles away the employment manager was sympathetic but, for the same reason as the others, helpless. They are keeping their men busy, but fear the necessity of partial close-down any minute; are being hard put to it to find places for returning soldiers.

While I told my story of unsuccessful selling and urged my qualifications, a group of hot-mill men came out, stopping from work on account of the day's terrific heat. He called after one of them with much meaning in his voice:

"Well, all right. But when you want to get some money on that swell auto you bought last week, let me know!

"Yes," he went on (I'll have to expurgate the expletives and the tobacco-juice), "we've reduced a lot of men to eight hours without increasing the rate of thirty-six cents —and it's pretty hard on them with the cost of living where it is.

"Shop committee representing the men? Great success. Nearly seventy-five per cent of all foreigners and of everybody voted, and they surprised us by electing the very best men in the place—we couldn't have done better ourselves. And they're ironing out grievances in good shape. . . .

"You're right; steel's a great game and has got a big future ahead of it. But all the same, if I was you, I'd hike back into selling. Nobody gets any chance to work up around here from the bottom where you are. A lot of times I've made notes on likely fellows I've seen come in. But by the time I'd got around to it again to give 'em a lift, they were gone. It's no use. The machine's too big in a place like this to work out any fine points like that. You take my advice and try your old line again."

And he was supposed to be the champion of the human interests in a plant employing not more than 1,300 men!

I thanked him for his good-will and for the courtesy of

his telling me his own personal misfortunes, and walked slowly away with my head down. The question in my mind was this: "I wonder is there any connection between his alibi for any promotion or transfer system and his evident desire to curry favor with the men by using the vilest lot of profanity and obscenity I've heard in a long time? Is he trying to make his personal popularity as a 'good fellow' hide his inability to get a square deal for the chaps he should be looking out for?"

After slinking off with a disappointed and hopeless hang of my shoulders as long as he could see me, I turned the corner and ran to catch the train for one of the country's big steel centres a few hours away.

"Here's the situation," one of the employment clerks there put it—and a very able looking, kindly chap he was, too. "To help win the war we jumped from well over 10,000 to over 30,000 men, with ninety-eight per cent war work. Now we're *below* ten and no telling what's going to happen. There are 2,000 of our men off who are supposed to be paying us interest on mortgages we fixed up for 'em ourselves. Naturally, we want to put 'em to work again, but it can't be done unless we have orders. To-morrow morning you'll see 500 men outside here, and we'll take on as many as we possibly can. . . . Yes, at thirty-six cents if they are common labor. But what can we do? The company is losing money on this kind of operation as it is. . . . In a few weeks it may be worse—or better. If you drop back this way, you'll find me right here."

Questions around the town brought out that rents were very high in their opinion (six rooms thirty dollars, three or four rooms twenty); that many, many houses were vacant, some of the men getting work in other kinds of plants under the same management while others with mortgaged houses had to stick around in hopes of a job some morning; that the foreigners were hard to make stick in the unions, es-

pecially if they had ever been "stung" by an unhappy union experience; that certain Slavic peoples were the worst "booze-fighters," and that "there'll be a lot more drinkin' after July 1—everybody'll make it hisself."

Irontown,
June 5th.

It's not important because I'm not trying to find out how I feel under these various conditions. But still, I find it amazing to notice how depressed I get after even a few hours of such job-askings—with the drooping chin and shoulders, averted eyes, lowered voice, and bad grammar of the jobless man—and such job-refusals as to-day's. In between comes, of course, the very unpleasant knowledge that people who pass me on the street turn to stare at my old clothes and run-down appearance. After a day of such walkings, askings, and turn-downs, it seems to take all the will power I can muster to keep from feeling as down-at-the-heel, hopeless, and generally useless and worthless as I look. All the memories of years of interesting work, helpful friends and hopeful aspirations, seem somehow to grow just as leary of me in my old clothes and hangdog air as are the passers-by.

Equally surprising, too, is the way all these come back and sort of shake me by the hand to make up again the moment I get signed up for the job. So I'm sure I'll feel better when I can happen to run somewhere into a steel job in the next week or so of search.

Meanwhile I find myself enjoying the men in the smoking-car, many of whom seem glad to tell the story of their lives in terms of jobs:

"Well, my line'd be called 'special messenger.' F'r instance, I'm sent by the express company to-night to see that a carload of berries don't get side-tracked anywhere. I'll probably find another man at the big station here, and

From a photograph by Lewis W. Hine

MIGRATORY WORKERS

The "migratory worker" as the hobo calls himself, is an almost indispensable public servant, as long as certain districts furnish jobs only at certain seasons. "A job for every day a man wants one" is the first plank in his platform

he'll see it into N——, and I'll go back home on the next train. Once I helped through from Texas to New York a train-load of spinach! The express charge sure was a lulu—over $11,000! A delay anywhere in transit would have ruined the whole biz. . . . Before I got into this line? Oh, I sold subscriptions to an illustrated weekly on the instalment plan to factory and mine workers. Foreigners? I should say the foreigners did buy it! You see they wanted the pictures even if they couldn't always read the explanations—or their kids read 'em for 'em. I'll say I helped some to Americanize these fellows with those weekly pictures."

But I've nearly forgotten to mention that before leaving S—— I talked with one of the chief organizers of the iron and steel workers, by the name of Foster. He seems to think he has his own troubles in spreading his local organizers around enough to keep the different local unions satisfied.

"They call me a radical, but I'm only anxious to get somewhere; while all the old fellows say: 'Oh, yes, we've tried to get the big plants too many times already!' Why, if we could only get the heads of these other twenty-four internationals anxious—*genuinely interested*—we'd have the whole industry in a month!"

He gave me the impression of not being altogether sure that he could interest them, and he was evidently surprised to find so many workers joining the union in plants which are reported happy and contented, adding: "Of course, where the men have right wages, hours, working conditions, treatment, and all that, and are happy, we ain't got a chance with 'em."

He's a very quiet fellow of the intellectual type, partly red-haired, mainly bald—not much magnetism, and, I judge, a poor speaker. His chief, Fitzpatrick, is big, magnetic, diplomatic, a wonderful speaker, and a splendid pre-

sider. How far the two will go in the direction of their reputed earlier syndicalist connections is a question, but together they certainly look like heady, hustling, professional organizers. Tighe, the president of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin-plate Workers impresses one as conservative, reliable, able, and well-balanced. I judge he's not particularly friendly with the other two—or with the whirlwind campaign for members which has, as it were, been forced on his organization through them.

"Foster grew up in Chicago in a catch-as-catch-can sort of way that made him an 'anti'—and would sure make anybody the same," said a man who should know. "After all sorts of unions had tried to organize the stock-yards workers, always separately and always unsuccessfully, he came along with the proposal of a sort of federated whirlwind campaign idea. When the combined drive was organized under the leadership of representatives of all the unions that could find members in the yards, such as steamfitters, electricians, etc., he was made secretary. It worked. While the packers do not deal with the unions, nevertheless a great many advantages have been secured. At the St. Paul convention of the American Federation of Labor it was voted to use the same plan under the committee for organizing iron and steel workers, with representation of the twenty-four unions involved, and with, naturally, Foster as secretary."

CHAPTER VII

WITH THE BUILDERS OF SHIPS

"Shipyardia,"
Monday, June 9th.

A man and a citizen again! A do-er and a be-er—a be-er because a do-er. I've got a job. I'm to be a builder of boats—for those that "go down to the sea in ships."

It seemed too good to be true this morning when the policeman condescended to nod as I asked him, in the employment office, if they were taking men on. A little later a straw-hatted young blood took my alias and "Cleveland, O." for an address, told me there was no job for any "semi-skilled," put me down as a helper, got my signature to accept the company's arrangements for accident compensation, and passed me out to the doctor. He soon had on my chest his rubber gloves—which protected him from the touch of hundreds of skins but did not prevent passing all those touches on to me. I think I'll go into quick consumption if I have to take any more jobs and cough for all the doctors as hard as he made me cough for him while he examined for rupture. When he finished he said I must have strained myself lately. I think I know when it happened—under one of those engines. But he may be a crank on such matters, from the way I heard him making other poor fellows cough their heads off while I was dressing. "Cough, I said! Don't you know how to cough?" he exploded as one chap, evidently much confused, made a sort of dying gladiator gasp or intake instead of a cough.

The company's boarding-house makes a very good impression. The beds look clean; with not more than two

or three (all single) in each room. The shower-baths appear fine; the food for one meal at least has been quite fair. Apparently the bed and board are well worth the charge of ten dollars per week.

"Be here at seven-thirty to-morrow morning" is good music for jobless ears.

Tuesday, June 10.

Have hardly done a stroke of work to-day, though I feel just as tired as if the work had been hard and justified its four dollars and thirty-two cents for eight hours.

It was a wonderful sight to see thousands of men pour out of the trains from the city and flow into the gates and through the time-clock runways, there to disappear in the direction of the steel hulls which loomed up about the tall scaffolds on the ways. After the policeman let us in we were marched off to a room under one of the ten great ways or hull platforms. There we were exhorted:

"Now, men, if any of you are anyways a-scary of scaffolds, now's the time to say so. It wastes a lot of time to assign a man to a job and then have him take one look down to the ground and come back and want us to start him all over again. . . . Well, then you're all game, are you? All right, you foremen, take your pick."

I went off with one foreman and with two or three other beginners, mounted the incline that took us to the noisy and busy-looking deck of a steel monster. As one chap came up, the foreman said, "Go with him. He ain't got nothin' for you to do, but that's all right." Before I got off, another and a more aggressive reamer came along and took me with him. But I got only as far as a hole and a ladder leading down below when he motioned me to wait for him—the noise of pounding and riveting made words almost impossible.

When I began to look around I decided that many others must have been advised to wait as I was. Although the

noise made it seem as if every man and boy in the crowd covering the deck must be killing himself with overwork, the eye testified that there were many idle hands. Two or three hours later this was not so noticeable.

After I had sat there for close to an hour wearing an "I'm-willing-to-work-and-only-waiting-for-my-boss" expression, he returned and motioned me down the ladder. And there I've stayed all day since, in practically solitary confinement—because the noise is so fearful that all conversation is out of the question. Such din as a pneumatic hammer and a few ship-builders can make in a small room almost completely enclosed in steel! Luckily I found some cotton to put in my ears, but even then it was deafening. And when somebody up on deck would hit one of the steel flooring sheets above us with a sledge, I'd jump with the sheer pain of it! Meanwhile the boss had next to nothing to do; he would sit for an hour like a bump on a log, then jump up and ream out a few rivet-holes, then perhaps go up on deck wearing for camouflage the air of a man who's on an errand —and be gone for another hour. When I would finally go up to get a little farther from the din, he'd find me and again motion me down below where I could do my loafing less observed. Perhaps then he'd have me hand him something—followed by an hour of nothing but observing how the passer-boys picked up the red-hot rivets as they came flying down from the heater-boy above on deck, and put them into the proper hole, where, in an instant, the riveter pushed them through and commenced hammering the hot metal—at first quietly as the rivet gave way and filled the hole, then noisily as it cooled and the hammer came onto the resounding steel of the plate forming the ship's side.

It seems the riveter inside, the holder-on, who opposes the riveter with his hammer-gun on the scaffold outside, and the heater-boy on deck divide $5.50 among them (not evenly) for every one hundred rivets, and how they

do work if the driver in my compartment is any sample! It's a pleasure to watch his energy and his muscles and his skill in the handling of his heavy hand-tool. The electric welder with his shield-glass before his eye is an absorbed worker, too, though you can't look directly at the beautiful light he makes. But you soon get tired of watching workers do exactly the same thing time and again, as well as enjoying the strings of light where the sun shines through the rivet holes or the shooting-stars of the hot rivets. Strangely enough, in the midst of the worst noises my ears ever had to stand, my greatest desire was to go to sleep. This I didn't give in to, so that when my reamer walked over in my direction I could rise with an interested expression and then sit down when he winked and passed on—to sit on some softer plank behind me.

It wasn't so bad in the afternoon, but most of the morning there would be an average of, say, three men loafing in our little steel-bound club-house to every five or six working. A big boss could be spotted by his shoes and legs on the ladder, and an alibi appearance of activity arranged before his eyes descended. On deck such soldiering would easily be spotted. Personally I was at my buddy's elbow whenever he was on the job, but counting all the times I handed him a hammer or something, I think a liberal estimate of my day's exertion in muscle would be five minutes. But my ear-drums!—they have had the busiest little day of their lives, bar none. They have evidently kicked up trouble about it, for my head feels as if a sympathetic strike were on.

This noon, when the workers swarmed down from the ways to eat their lunch in every conceivable spot, a capable-looking man of the American carpenter type told me how things were going with him:

"Yes, I remember I was here five days before I found anybody who really needed anybody to help him. I guess

those fellows want a helper so he can hand 'em dignity mostly."

He was full of a more recent experience:

"Last week I got strapped for money. So I asked about gettin' some of the money due me. Well, I signed this and that, and went here and there and all over the yard according to everybody's directions. When I got my money I'd been firin' myself all this time—it seems that was the only way I could get it. So there was nothin' for me to do but to take my money and coat and my dinner and go home to loaf the rest of the day. Then Monday—that's yesterday—I had to come down to that place they call the 'Service Buildin'' (huh!) and ask for a job and be rehired. And so here I am again—on a brand-new job to-day 's if I'd had never been here before. So you see I had to pay two days' wages, or a total of nearly nine dollars, to get what was owin' to me—and all I wanted was a small loan—just a part of it, say fifteen dollars. Ain't that a devil of a note, now?"

To-night, when I came down to the ground from my steel cell and the deck, I had no time-card to punch. The time-clerks were greatly disgusted.

"Why didn't you go to the Service Building and get one when you were told? . . . Why, of course you were told. You *must* have been. That's the system. You've lost your day now."

Finally it was arranged that I should get proper credit at the office to-morrow.

It was about all I could do to walk home to-night at four. But that shower-bath helped a lot. I'll hope to-morrow will make it possible to say I've got *work* as well as a job. I'm all in to-night for some reason—I mostly suspicion those ears.

Thursday, June 12.

It's a shame to do it after only two days of work, but unless I feel a lot better in the next hour or so I guess I'll have

to quit—instead of loafing around the next two days as the doctor told me to do last night.

Yesterday, thank Heaven, there was less noise to stand because of being assigned to an outside reamer. We stayed up on a scaffold nearly forty feet above the ground, and easily made sure to keep enough well-reamed holes ahead of the riveter working inside the hull and our holder-on there on the scaffold with us, something over forty feet from the ground.

During the whole day the reamer had to be helped to hold his machine for as much as an hour and a half, on a liberal estimate. All the rest of the day I sat on the scaffold with my back in a comfortable position, or climbed into the shell where the sides had not been put on, and where I could stretch out without being seen from below and still be in call of my buddy. A good deal of the time he was there beside me. At other times it was interesting to watch the men, with the help of the great tall church steeple of a crane, pushing and crow-barring and sledging the long girders into place for making the keel at the bow.

The reamer does seem to have an easy time of it. Why he has to be assigned wholly to one gang alone, I don't know, unless it is that sometimes the riveting gang might need him badly for a lot of holes and let out a mighty holler if they couldn't get him. Which they surely would not hesitate to do, because every rivet means money to them. It makes you almost weary to see 'em sweat. Before noon yesterday our gang hammered 417 rivets into place.

"Just think o' that!" said a foreman as he saw it. "Them guys divvy up between 'em about twenty-three dollars for that half day's work!"

Both the holder-on and my reamer were Lithuanians who were beginning to look very much like young American "sports," but in spite of their years here could speak extremely little English.

Along about three, eyes and head were aching enough to permit a good chance to see what the company dispensary would do to make me feel like standing up to my arduous duties the next day. I rather expected to observe the same methods as in an earlier plant where the doctor took my word for it that I felt "cold-y and sore-throat-y" and without taking any steps to confirm my home-made diagnosis, gave me a horse-size dose of epsom and Jamaica ginger. I had in mind, too, the army doctor who was reported to have given eighty glasses of salts to the soldier boys who marched past him after their temperature had been discovered and reported by a lieutenant, and, in the flu epidemic, administered the dose to them all out of the one glass!

But I could not have been given more consideration. An assistant took my temperature carefully, counted my pulse, and looked at my tongue. The only hardship I suffered was to see another doctor pull off, in what I thought was a heartless manner, the nail of a fellow-worker, assuring him meanwhile in a jocular fashion: "Why, my boy, I wouldn't hurt you for the world."

"With a temperature of 102 you aren't safe, and your buddies aren't safe with you on that scaffold," the doctor said when he got his assistant's report. "Take these pills and loaf around for a couple of days. Remember, you can't get back on the job until you get my O. K."

This morning I can appreciate better than ever the tremendous importance for evil and good of the close connection between our physiological health and well-being and our psychological attitudes and feelings toward those around us. By the time I got up to my room yesterday I felt positively sorry that somebody had not spoken to me in a way that would have permitted me to unload all the vitriol that my aches and pains and fatigues had by this time piled up inside me. I've no question but that many workers who are either sick or doing hard work for very

long hours day after day and month after month in order to get more money, are more or less permanently in my mood—and therefore over ready to listen while the agitator—who usually has himself been through that same thing—directs all *his* vitriol against the industrial system.

Lying on my bed all last evening gave good opportunity for a chat with my Polish roommate. Ever since he struck this country, nearly ten years ago, he has been a heater on a hot-mill, and a wonderful pair of arms and shoulders it has given him. In fact he's as clean-cut a bundle of 175 pounds of young manhood as any one could wish to see—and he gets my complete respect as he puts out the light and kneels down in his B. V. D.'s by his bed for what must be a long statement of his wishes to his particular saint. Life seems to leave him a good deal to ask for, too:

"Nine year I work hot-mill, alla time same place. Work stop dere. Stay two mont's—wait—alla time no job. One mont' I try New York—every day look for steel job. No good. Wife she seeck last winter—flu. Doctor he say she no can live. Hospital—she cost forty dollars week. Baby come—baby die—wife she no die. . . . Now must work here one mont' before catch money for first two week. Today I got one dollar. . . . What do all dees mont' I no can tell."

And he can work here only three days a week, at that!

Thursday afternoon,
June 12.

I think I've already mentioned the impression a fellow gets that lots of paymasters seem to hate to give up money after the worker has fulfilled his part of the bargain.

This morning I told the doctor that I had decided to quit. After making two trips to the service department I got my check-slip back with his instructions to get my "termination notice" from the foreman for my money.

That gentleman did not believe my story about a letter from my wife wanting me to come home:

"If I was to tell *my* boss I had such a letter and couldn't produce it, he'd call *me* a liar, too." An extremely diplomatic way, I'd say, of calling me a liar—which I was.

I objected that I had done everything the company asked me, that it was my money and this a free country, etc., but to no purpose.

The time-office clerks had treated me nicely the day before so I went in and repeated it all. After the clerk had said for the fourth time, "Nothing doing. You gotta wait till pay-day. That's the rule," I started away, permitting myself to remark, "Some system!"

It was delivered in good enough mood; any worker would have said it, especially since there was no effort whatever to show that the rule had any reason behind it. But the clerk took offense:

"If you don't like the system you know d—— well what you can do!" he shouted.

I smiled to myself and moved to the door. But as I did so I could see every clerk in the room raise his eyes and gaze toward me and silently give me the ha-ha of his scorn and contempt. By the time I had passed them all and got outside the door, these silent derisions from better-dressed people than myself, sitting in the seats of might and management, had served to make me feel about two feet high—and therefore extremely hurt and mad. I wanted to go back and land something on the jaw of my assailant—for he *was* a psychological assailant. But I reflected that all my authority—the whole machine of management—was on *his* side. So as I walked back for a final statement at the Service Building all my anger directed itself toward, not the time-clerk, but the whole establishment of which he was a part.

Of course, any one can say, "Now be logical. That chap

is only a small cog in the whole machine. The manager would be sorry if he knew that he butted in," etc., etc. But when a fellow's self-respect is smarting the way mine was just then, logic doesn't get a ghost of a show, and from that moment to this I've had no use for the company from top to bottom—and the doctor's heartless pulling off the worker's nail looks now more representative to me than his considerate taking of my temperature. Why should that whipper-snapper of a pompadoured time-clerk "bawl me out"? These paymaster offices certainly do roil my blood! I'm sorry I'm learning to swear—it's very hard work to keep from it right here. And the point is that I want to curse the company as much as I want to curse that clerk who uses the back of his head only to hold his hat on, but who, of course, is bold enough to take refuge in that mock bravery with which all the foremen and others who know authority is on their side bolster themselves—"Well, if you don't like it you know what you can do."

"The petty tyranny of little minds in brief authority!" My, but that makes me mad—and I know from many mouths that it makes numberless other workers no less so.

But to try to calm down and go on. At the Service Building the boy ultimatumed:

"You'll have to send in your badge-check and we'll send you the money—if you can't stick around until pay-day."

"Well, here it is—I'll leave it now," I said.

"No, that won't do; you must send it by mail—like that pile of them over there."

Yesterday it would never have occurred to me, but now that I've met that time-clerk, I'm wondering if the company wants that check entrusted to the post-office in the hope that it may stand a chance to go astray.

If that thought occurs to me, it's pretty sure to occur with more force to thousands of my recent buddies—and so increase distrust.

I had hoped to get in a word about the process of ship-building—how the ore comes to the docks of a near-by company, is passed from blast-furnace to Bessemer and open-hearth and rolling-mill until it lies as a great steel sheet cut to size and, still warm, ready to have holes punched in it according to the pattern; how this sheet is then swung overhead by the church steeple until it lies in the right place, say, on the deck; how men sledge-hammer "drift-pins" in the holes of one sheet until they come near to fitting those of the adjoining one, ready for the bolter-ups, who proceed with their bolts further to hold the sheets in place together as though with steel basting-threads; how the reamers drill out the unevennesses of the corresponding holes so that the riveters can get the large rivets through, etc., etc. But, thanks to that important pompadoured personification of unpleasantness, I've no stomach just now for such matters.

I guess I can be decent enough to say that the company houses at twenty-two dollars per month, with free water, seem very attractive with their six rooms and bath.

"That's because they was built before the war," said a contractor. "These we're finishing now are no better hardly and will have to fetch thirty dollars. Nobody but rollers and men like that'll be able to live in 'em."

Perhaps I ought also to add that the ship workers look to me like a rougher and also a younger set of men than I've seen elsewhere—possibly because it is a new and perhaps short-lived industry. Many seem to be of the floating type. Whether that is the *cause* of a pretty careless management or the *result*, I don't know. I wish somebody would tell me whether it's all hang-over from the days of the "cost-plus" contract. That would explain why I am to be paid, as I hope, some sweet day, something like eight dollars for about ninety-five minutes of what might be called work. But I'm not going to feel bad about it; the wear

and tear on my ears on the job and on my disposition in the pay-office makes the money seem perfectly well earned. I'm only sorry not to have learned more about ship-building.

My grip is packed and I leave for pastures fresh—and, doubtless, pay-clerks ditto.

Atlantic City,
Sunday, June 15.

One of the most noticeable of all the high spots of this annual convention of the American Federation of Labor is the skill with which the body does its business. Mr. Gompers, I would hazard, can hardly be excelled anywhere in America as a presiding officer. He never lets the meeting get away from him for a moment, and at the right point seems to bring in the suggestion which clears matters. He is certainly fair—in fact he is said to follow the policy of allowing the trouble makers so much parliamentary rope that they generally succeed in strangling themselves. For a man of his years he has a remarkably resonant voice. To be sure, he has had lots of practice, having presided at thirty-eight out of thirty-nine of the Federation's yearly conventions!

The delegates as a body appear to me almost as remarkable as he. Their voices are much better suited to transact business of this kind than would be those of, say, such a group of representative business men as could be called together by any national commercial organization. (I recall one chairman at one such national convention not long ago, whose voice and bearing made him a laughing-stock.) And as for rules of order, this crowd has the whole country beaten badly. Still better, most of them seem to talk pretty good sense about their various organization problems. Some of them are master statesmen on even such subjects as the League of Nations. Naturally enough they *feel* very strongly about the various issues because these touch very closely their bread and butter; or if not that, then their

standing and self-respect as leaders. So they have that high pitch of emotion and earnestness which are essential to real eloquence. Some of them are said to take lessons in public speaking, but others who have been attending these conventions for years because of their position at the head of one or other of the internationals, appear to get enough practice to make them past masters in the influencing of the crowd.

As a body, too, I must say that the delegates are a superior-looking lot of men and women. Naturally they represent a great amount of sifting—about 600 out of a total membership claimed to be over 3,000,000. Of course, a very large proportion of these millions seldom go to the local halls to debate or to vote, and as a result many of the leaders have stayed in influence year after year, even though the rank and file may have passed to other opinions.

The executive committee appears to have large powers and is apparently made up of the very strongest men in the whole group of leaders in all the various unions. It is always made plain, though, that this body has no powers whatever to control the actions or the policies of any of the 111 national and international unions composing it, unless these specifically give such power to the central body, as in the case of the arbitration of a dispute between two or more member organizations, each of which, for instance, claims jurisdiction over some new group of workers. I imagine this point is missed by the many who think that Mr. Gompers and his associates at the top should be expected always to compel the action of the 111. On the contrary, each of these has an autonomy which extends much further than, for instance, that of the 48 State governments. Furthermore, any attempt to override this self-government of the 111 constituents might easily mean the withdrawal of the offended group, and with it the cutting off of the per capita membership fee without which the Federation cannot do

business. To that extent, therefore, each of the 111 has the larger body in its power.

It certainly looks as though this executive committee had a lot of knotty problems assigned to it for both study and final decision later by the votes of the delegates. But, so far, the decisions as brought in by them and by the committee on resolutions appear to get the O. K. of the convention amazingly. Whenever they are questioned, a member gets up—like John P. Frye of the moulders, Mathew Woll of the engravers, or William Green of the coal-miners. After he has stated the different steps that led to the decision, there seems to be nothing further to be said, and the vote goes through in support of them and their recommendation.

Over at one table in front have been gathered the radicals from the West, especially the Pacific coast, with red-haired "Jimmy Resolution Duncan," of Seattle, in charge. They have tried all during the two weeks to put through this or that radical resolution—to change Labor Day to May 1; to allow a referendum whenever five per cent of the members of the union desire; to place the hiring and firing of their foremen in the hands of the workers; to recognize Bolshevik Russia, etc., etc. Regularly all the votes go against them, and regularly they get up to charge that the powers that be are standpatters, reactionaries, and conservatives who have outlived their usefulness. Most of the social-service workers and such guests at the convention agree with them, but I can't help thinking that these critics read into the minds of the millions of workers who have at least theoretically elected these delegates, a lot of desires and demands which, personally, I have not yet been able to find there. For the most part, that is, it seems to me, these workers have got only as far as these leaders have themselves got—namely, to the point of wanting to put their feet—the feet of their representatives—under the same table with the plant heads

and then negotiate, or, as they say, bargain, for better wages and hours and working conditions. After that at some distant time, maybe, they may want more, but why bother about that now? Just now—and for a long time to come—they are all more interested in getting a vested interest in the *job* than in the plant or management, general misunderstanding to the contrary notwithstanding.

"As a matter of fact," Foster, the organizer for iron and steel workers, is reported to have said, "even after we get 'em into the union we have to do a lot of educatin' to get 'em to caring even about such things as the eight-hour day."

Secretary of Labor Wilson gave a good plea for conservatism, evidently intended to back up Gompers. "Let's hold what we have before we fight for more."

"If our red friends were to win their way in this convention," said John Frye, "wouldn't some of our employer friends who'd like to see us all shot at sunrise, be sighing for the good old days of conservative Sam and the rest of us, though! We're for evolution, not revolution."

"Why, if regular Wall-Streeters were down here," said one of the highly educated "innocent bystanders," "they wouldn't do a bit different from these standpat leaders!"

But I find it hard to believe that "Sam" doesn't know very well where he came from and where he and his beloved "labor movement" are getting to. All of them certainly make no bones of saying in the presence of the "fraternal delegates" from England and Canada that this "movement" of theirs has done immensely more for the worker here than has the "movement" in any other country, bar none.

One big underlying divergence of opinion is as to the craft union or the industrial union. Of course no attention could be paid to the radical resolution "that the A. F. of L. be reorganized away from the craft and onto the industrial

basis." That would mean disbandment and play directly into the hands of the I. W. W. or the "One Big Union." At the same time, the present craft basis seems to make the jurisdictional disputes unavoidable (as when the steam-shovel men become the electric-crane men following the electrification of their jobs), and these do take up a lot of the convention's time. Then, too, how can an employer deal with "the union" when that may mean dealing with twenty or more different and more or less quarrelsome and jealous unions? Progress toward the industrial union is, however, being made by the success of such as the "miners," which includes everybody working in the mine, and by the formation of "departments" in the A. F. of L. in which all the related fields try a little harder to work together. For instance, the four big printing-trades unions are now arranging to have their contracts with the employers all begin on the same day, and in partnership with the employer associations to hire an expert to find the cost of living as the basis of the yearly and industry-wide wage adjustments.

Inasmuch as this organization of all the workers into one body, without respect to craft or function, is the basis of the French Syndicalism and the American I. W. W., it is promoted mainly by the radicals. The present plan of the more intelligent of these, however, is said to be to try to take the A. F. of L. as it stands and change it gradually by "boring from within." This is said to be the purpose of Foster—with what truth no one seems to know. He and the chairman of the committee report here that after ten months of their joint campaign to organize iron and steel workers, they have secured 100,000 members! And now rumors have it that the heads of the iron and steel workers unions are fearful that the success of the plan will put these former—and perhaps present—syndicalists into control of their conservative unions.

Altogether it might look as though a steel company

might well consider dealing with any union that would follow the conservative leadership of such as head the moulders, the miners, the printers, and others; going, as it were, to their defense against their highly active and highly radical enemies. But, unfortunately, the group of steel manufacturers who are already dealing with the Amalgamated Iron, Steel, and Tin Plate workers are at this very moment finding it most difficult, up at the Marlboro-Blenheim, to come to any satisfactory agreement for the year ensuing. In fact, they have been on the point of breaking off negotiations entirely, following what they claim to be attempts on the part of some of the union's officials in some of the local communities to break earlier agreements as made on a national basis, and otherwise to demand changes seriously hurtful to these manufacturers. I am told, also, that the Amalgamated's president acknowledges the difficulty he has in getting all his local chapters to see the importance of a line of conduct such as will make more and more employers want the union's advantages—and that for that reason he regrets the sudden methods of the special campaign which will give him a still larger body of members whose conduct will be all the harder to control.

So until the employers who deal with a union are able to give recommendations following their actual experience, there seems nothing to do but await with courage the coming of the campaign's forces, meanwhile remembering the words of Foster:

"Sure, where the men are getting good wages, right hours, good conditions, and are generally happy, we organizers can't do nothin' with 'em."

It is also worth remembering those other words from him—and some believe him a real expert on mass psychology:

"In steel and iron where men work together in big bunches, we can get everybody to strike even though we have only ten per cent—the most important and leading ten per cent

—with us; but we want 'em all and we won't do nothing till we get at least thirty per cent."

If you ask Foster what he'll do when he gets his thirty per cent all ready to strike—what he'll ask for, he says:

"That's not my business. I'm only an organizer. I've got no programme or demands except that I want the twenty-four co-operating unions to give more organizers to work under me—and then we'll soon be ready to turn things over to the boys who have got the demands ready."

Well, the convention assuredly makes it look like a real "movement"—much too real and too complex for an observer to expect to know very deeply or widely about it without much more study and experience than has been vouchsafed to me. On the other hand, it certainly is too real and too large—and too serious-minded and capable—to permit most of us to go on assuming that it is unsafe and un-American to speak or know anything about it. It seems to me certain that it would help some toward industrial equilibrium if a larger number of employers would drop into the public—very public—sessions of the convention next year. There seems to be no secret sessions unless it may be those of the executive committee, which I doubt. Furthermore, it would seem highly proper for no employer to take as representing the union's attitude the unreasonable dictum of a local business agent without giving the national heads a chance to pass on it. Most of these certainly give the impression of sincerity as well as reasonableness and ability.

CHAPTER VIII

IN AN OIL REFINERY

For a few days following the convention life was a sort of chameleon affair—with a day of job-seeking in old clothes followed by a day of white-collared attendance at a conference or two—conferences where it was desirable though extremely difficult to keep silence when matters were discussed which touched closely on the field of my current experiences.

One of the old-clothes days was spent in an Eastern city where all the steel-plants seemed exceptionally well organized for giving the applicant exceptionally good treatment and consideration. Altogether, the courtesies shown were such as could only make the seeker after a job keenly sympathetic with the employment manager, who seemed himself in all cases extremely sorry that, on account of "dull times in steel," he could not hire more men. In one case the clerk came out onto the street and showed me the way to another plant, with the hope, evidently sincere, that better luck might be with me there.

Since then it has been very interesting and gratifying to learn that that particular city enjoys the reputation for a minimum of labor trouble.

Finally,—but the diary tells of it sufficiently:

Tankton,
July 4, —.

All things considered, the hardest and worst job to date, and the closest shave yet, also, from being fired from it. Also the closest to being laid out by the combination of

job, sun, and foreman—and to being brained by the last-named. So I'm thankful for being alive and still on deck, though by a narrow margin.

"We don't take on no helpers," the employment clerk assured me at the gate of a great oil refinery. "Everybody starts in the labor gang and works up. Come around tomorrow and we'll probably take you on."

The next morning they were asking every applicant about his citizenship:

"You say thirty-five years in this country and no papers! You should be ashamed. There's no job for you."

Then to the next: "Them papers is all right. Will you take labor job? . . . Well, I guess you don't want to work or you'd speak up. How about you, Mike?"

Finally six of us were started off under the lead of a chap who had worked there before, and who said he had once had a fight with the boss for whom we were now headed. Before we had gone far he had to coax along four of the party, who seemed to have no taste for this particular boss or department. Another hundred yards and both he and the four dropped out and started back another way, leaving a stranger who had joined the party and myself to continue —two finishers out of seven starters.

He had worked in the plant thirty-one years before—at the age of eleven! He had many remarks about the old days when "Right there we used to raise Cain with the apples in a big orchard, and now see that big building. Don't it beat the devil?

"Sixteen years I sold vegetables—but you had to give too much credit, and it busted me. Nowadays it takes too much money—$400 to look at a horse and wagon!"

We had hardly given our names and got our numbers, lockers, and aprons of coarse sacking, before we were sent with others to report to the "pitch house." There the trouble began, at least for me. The gang's job was to fill

barrels with pitch, pass them by two men who nailed the hoops in place, and then roll them into position in the storage yard. Hour after hour in the hottest sun of this summer my job was to roll every barrel—hundreds of them, each weighing about 500 pounds—over the rough gravel; then, worst of all, to "bung it up"—turn it and twist it and tug it into its place, always with its freshly inserted bung up to prevent leaking. The job is no snap for a beginner and his bare hands—there is a lot of knack in it which no one can get the first day. When my temples began to drum hard and my mouth to fill full of cotton so that I felt a few minutes in the shade might barely save me from sunstroke, I asked my Polish foreman about changing places with one of those in the shade at easier jobs. In a surly voice I was refused any change and any rest—the barrels would pile up and stop the line even as I spoke. Just as I was about to say "Thank God" from the bottom of my soul for the arrival of four o'clock I heard the boss say "Overtime to-night, boys!" as if he were handing out candy! Luckily the sun grew a little cooler, and finally, too, he gave another worker to help, and both of us were kept busy.

At five I learned that all overtime work is optional, so I knocked off and stumbled, almost too exhausted to walk, up to the very handsome shower-baths and wash-basins. A shower certainly would be splendid after such a day. I found that the soda furnished in place of soap hurt my hands where the skin had been torn off by the sharp barrel-ends, and would not remove the tar sufficiently to let me either take my shower or wash my face. After a long time with the burning soda I went down and called to my boss, "Where's some naphtha?" and showed him my tar-covered hands.

"Aw, you don't get no naphtha here—you'll have to go home that way," he shouted, and then jeered at me. "Say, how did you get that way, you poor fish!"

It was too much for my sore-tried muscles and frazzled nerves. After cursing him—and regretting that my inexperience made it less effective than I wished—I asked him in anger: "Where's *your* boss so I can report you to him?"

As I went back, covered by his jeers and curses, a fellow-worker of Slavish birth took pity and directed me to a pail of naphtha in the shanty—*the boss's shanty!*

I have seldom been so done up in my life as that evening—and, because of that and poor sleep that night, took a bad lot of feeling with me into the plant the next morning. Most of the time I was paired off in rolling some heavy barrels up a steep incline into the freight cars with an ignorant Italian who knew not even the commonest words in English—after ten years here! After some hours of it my weary nerves let go and I lost my temper when his ignorance made the barrel go wrong before the eyes of the gang and the boss.

"I can't work with that man!" I cried out. "He knows nothing. I try to use my head to make it go straight and he spoils it all!"

"Hain't I told you," roared the boss, "that you ain't supposed to use your head around here! Muscle's all we want. Put your muscle into it!" (This after his yesterday's efforts to teach me to "bung-up" by using my head.)

All day it got more and more on my nerves to have him continually order us about as though we were slaves. "Hey, there, you!"—and since he knew none of our names because we were all new to him, we had all of us to look up—"Yank that big skid over there! Come on, come on, let's go!" Or if any one made a move to do something without being told, "Hey, what you up to, huh? Well, you wait till I tell you to," followed a half-hour later by, "Say, won't none of you fellows make a single motion right without me bein' here to tell you?"

Finally as his wrath turned on me once more for some-

thing, I fairly saw red. If a weapon had been handy I think I would have used it, even at the cost of a lifetime's regret. As it was, I turned on him with the strongest curses I have ever dared even to think, much less to utter, in all my life. I was desperate, tried beyond endurance by his slave-driving combined with a sore throat, the hard work, and the scorching heat, added on to the preceding day's fatigue and bad treatment. I expected to be knocked down. To my utter amazement, and also that of the gang, he said nothing.

I felt better for being a rebel for the rest of the turn, but he was preparing his come-back. At four he said:

"You and I don't seem to get on together. I can't fire you, but this note will let me lose you, and you can mebbe get a chance in another department."

Saturday the department superintendent heard my story most considerately, expressed regret for the dirtiness and hardness of the work and for such bad bossing, said he would help me get into another department, as he "could see I looked more intelligent than most of 'em," and he "believed in helping even the newcomer to get on." So I'm to report to-morrow to a cool and clean-looking place where heavy, filled barrels are all over the place. But I can hustle them all right if I'm not insulted as a dog every fifteen minutes and made to feel that I'm keeping a perfectly good mule out of a job.

The foreman certainly is the holder of the worker's life and future, and he certainly is—in most of the places I've been—far from being what he should be in any world that has been made anything like safe for democracy. Here's hoping for a decent one to-morrow.

Tankton,
July 8.

Life is worth living again! I've got a decent foreman and so a bearable job.

When I found him yesterday a little before seven, he gave me a careful "up and down" and decided I'd do for weighing the empty barrels, which our crowd fixes up ready to be filled and shipped.

"You see these scales are marked for regular weights and also for kilos." (He pronounced it "kylos.") Now see if you can read that in pounds. . . . That's right. Now in kylos? . . . You've got it—and I'll tell you which weights is to be stencilled onto the barrels as they come. Now take that brush and see if you can work the stencil. . . . My G——, . . . no! That won't do. . . . Here Jim, give me that knife to rub it out! Now again and lighter, for the love o' Mike! There, that's O. K.—Now we're ready. Hey there, you fellows, let them barrels come—and don't be slow about it!"

There was no time just then to see what it was all about, but there certainly was, on the instant, a din of hammering and banging and rolling that soon put a barrel onto my scales—with another one waiting before my awkwardness succeeded in getting the right "regular weights" painted on it. And so it kept going nearly all day, with mighty little let-up except for a couple of hours when we were all taken over to another building where we took fresh-made and unpainted barrels down from their stacks in the big warehouse, twirled them onto the runways by which they finally got down onto a big barge that took them out to a ship for later use at some other plant.

I've come to have a lot of respect for the humble barrel. It's really a wonderful thing. That bulge in its centre makes it possible for an expert to do 'most anything with it—some of the boys were almost magicians with 'em. Of course, the biggest thing is that, when filled, the barrel can by this bulge be set upright or turned in this or that direction with an ease that is impossible with a bulgeless drum. I guess drums would sure enough have killed me—or made me kill that foreman—last week.

By "rubbering" when the barrels run a little slow, I could see that the fresh-coopered ones came over from the warehouse, passed through a paint vat, were placed on a runway that landed them before the chap who ran the machine to make their bung-holes of the exactly right size, then were flipped from one man to another until their ends were stencilled with the company name, brand, destination, etc., *and "Tare. . . ."*

I'll never forget that "Tare. . . ." That was where I had to mark my weights after a line of boys had nailed the hoops right and my buddy had shoved the completed barrel toward me. As quick as I could steady it, read the flickering hand on the dial and stencil the right number, I gave it a turn to roll down an incline to the filling room, where the full weight and number of gallons were put on by some other chap. By others it was rolled into the shipping-room or else onto the boat for New York or Antwerp, Copenhagen, Buenos Aires, or some such place.

The gang boss is a young Irishman, who seems friendly, besides being active and knowing his job. He gets the work out of all of us successfully and without ruffling us much—perhaps *because* he doesn't ruffle us much.

One boy did say: "Yes, he's better'n most, but at that he yells too much."

The yelling seems to be because he doesn't take the trouble to learn our names. So he has to yell in order to attract everybody's attention, and then point to the man he wants. When he's right near and yells loudly, the chances are he's yelling at somebody farther away, but if he yells loudly *and suddenly,* it may very well be yourself that's in very bad—and you look up in a good deal of fear and trembling. As a matter of fact, I guess everybody looks up every time he yells so as to be on the safe side, which comes pretty close to stopping the whole process in order to help him single out his men.

So far nobody has asked me my name—or used it if he had it. That seems a big mistake. It took me a year once to change my New York hotel because the clerks at the old place had power over me—they knew my name and used it to the limit; and the clerks at the new place didn't. I don't know any place where this ancient power of the name can be used to more purpose than in a gang of workers. The men seem to know all of this in a sort of reverse-English way. Several of them have spoken of their gang bosses:

"Yes, he's one of the best in the place—he don't yell hardly at all"—or the reverse.

For a long time all the boys around and the boss, too, let me know they thought I was pretty slow in marking my barrels and pushing 'em along.

Once I asked one of the youngsters nailing the hoops on to do it. He did show speed! But I noticed that he *never looked at the scales!*

"Oh, sure, but that takes too much time when you want to mark 'em fast!"

Another of my would-be instructors put it:

"When-a da boss come yell at you, always make out like-a you was deef. . . . Neva mind about da scales—mark 'em on as dey come on a da stencil—except when-a da boss he come by. Now you follow me—I make-a you learn fine."

Still another who had had experience was willing to be an instructor without charge: "Watch your scales and be damned quick about gettin' the right weight on *when you can see the boss out of the corner of your eye.* Otherwise, forget the scales and take it easy."

I've had almost no instruction on any of my jobs from the bosses—they've been too busy or else they or their bosses didn't think it was worth the time. But, Jiminy! I've had a lot of it from my buddies! Only most of that

has been to help me get by with as little personal effort and discomfort as possible. I'm inclined to think if *they* had been given a little more attention for interesting them in the job, they wouldn't be such down-hill teachers of the fellow like me. It looks like the sex-hygiene question—it isn't a matter of instruction or no instruction, but of good instruction or bad.

Along that line here's what a sixteen-year-old told me yesterday at lunch-time:

"I didn't get in the first time. I lied about my age, and they was onto me. But the second time I got by. Before I came the second time I was a few weeks at the shipyard. But J——! they was too many ambulances there! A wire rope was always droppin' on somebody and breakin' their head or somethin'. Why, they hired about 200 men every mornin'—because 200 would be quittin' after hearin' the ambulances for a half day. I had a friend who saw an accident in his first five minutes—and he walked down the scaffold and out immediately. Yes, I got a good boss now. Sure, he swears like h—— at you, but only when *his* boss is around—and he winks at you while he does it. . . . Sure I do a lot o' soldierin'. I'd say I can loaf most of the eight hours in one way or 'nuther. . . . Nope, I quit school a year ago. . . . My mother she's dead."

My buddies on last week's job report feeling about that murder-provoking foreman just as I did. Last night brought me onto one of them—a fine upstanding Irishman, with as strong a face as I've seen in a long time. We had a regular reunion.

"Oh—that ——. Thank God, I've been transferred from him, too. You didn't know that I had cursed him to his face a few days before, and so had all the rest of us just as you did! . . . Sure, he took it. If he'd made a move I'd 'a' smacked his —— mug. . . . *Of course*, he was rubbin' it in to us new guys—he gave all the easy jobs to

his pets. But then he handles everybody like slaves. Why, a week ago he works us and works us, tryin' an' pryin' to push an old rusty car down the platform. We pushed and we swore and we just sweat blood makin' that fool car move twenty feet—*fer an hour.* And then when we was about done fer, and we figgered he'd give us a bit of a spell, what did he do but say, 'Hey there, you slobs! Give us a little action now! Shake 'em up and *we'll make up for all that lost time!*' Now can you beat the like o' that? Why, for two cents we'd 'a' mobbed him."

Which reminds me that last week I remarked to that same boss—in a half-joking kind of way—how "the company'd make a million if they put concrete here instead of gravel, because they have to pay more for the harder work it makes pushin' these barrels on it."

"Say, young feller, you're in the wrong pew here," he answered. "They want bright boys like you over to the head office; you're too good for this. . . . But as long as you're here, just grab that barrel and rustle it over the gravel and into that car—and be —— quick about it, too."

If ever I run across a foreman who asks me if my doing of the actual job gives me any hunches that would save other men's labor, or the company money, and then nods his head and thanks me for my suggestion—well, the shock will probably be fatal.

Tankton,
Tuesday, July 9th.

To-day has certainly been an example of the figure Mr. Strawboss cuts in all this matter of the job—and every day makes it look surer that for the wage-worker the job, in turn, cuts the biggest figure of anything in life—for the wage-worker and, I guess, also, for every one of the rest of us, for that matter. (In England and on the continent the job perhaps counts less because a larger proportion of all

kinds of people expect to earn their living in one way, and then live their real life in another.)

We were all on hand before seven, ready to begin chasing "them barrels" across the scales and down-stairs as usual, when the gang boss announced:

"Nuthin' doin' to-day around here, boys! All hands come along with me."

All but one stuck even when the employment manager asked, after we had been lined up before him in his shanty:

"Now, if any of you fellows want anything better than a labor job, say so now and quit, because 'labor's' all I got to-day."

So we started off over to a great field where big tanks were being erected. When our particular six got to the job, there was a general explosion:

"Me stand there in that mud all day and shovel with them 'wops'! I'll tell the world I won't! Not me!"

"Say, look at that guy in the mud there to his knees! Wow, not for mine! Come on, I'm goin' home!"

"How you gonna keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen Paree," yelled another derisively, and we all headed back to the shanty to get our lunches and quit.

But a well-built and likable young returned soldier boy, without any hat and with light, curly hair and a friendly smile, saved the job for us by starting another current:

"I don't need money any worse'n that chap, but I did jobs worse'n than that in the army so I don't see why I shouldn't here. Where's a pair of them boots?"

Another, a very wiry, good-looking, and generally upstanding Pole, confessed "No like—but gotta catch monee."

Up to that point it had looked as though I would be treated with contempt if I stayed, but with these I was, with decency, able to throw in my lot. The soldier had saved our "faces" for all of us. While we three got into our hip-boots, the other three, with much profanity, took

off their working-clothes and pulled out of newspaper packages their street pants and shirts (some of them almost as torn and soiled as those they took off), and soon struck off for a day's loaf. It was hard for the others of us to feel sure of our self-respect in taking a job so distasteful to our buddies until they and their taunts were well out of sight and sound. As a matter of fact we felt, I'm sure, a good deal degraded as we stomped down to the mud-hole in our huge boots, our long shovels in hand.

"If the company's got eyes, Buddy," argued the soldier-boy, "they'll mark it up against them fellows for side-steppin' this work—and give us a long mark for tacklin' it. Say, mebbe they're doin' it to test us!"

I wish I could believe he was right, but I doubt it.

When we settled down to the work we found it not bad —and there's where the foreman comes in, as I started out to say. He was a black-haired, red-faced Italian who spoke seldom but kept his eyes open. He put us three in a line where the Pole was down lowest in the mire oozing up at the side of the great tank which had slid into the marsh. From the Pole's shovel I caught the segment of clayey mud on mine and, using my thigh for a fulcrum, hoisted the heavy stuff to the soldier, who hoisted it in turn from his boards up to the pile where two overtalkative and slow-moving Italians wheel-barrowed it away. And Mr. Foreman or Gang Boss let us have all the time we wanted. In fact, the soldier and I were given an easy pace by the Pole, who certainly showed no awe of the boss. Only one thing we could not do: we could lean on our shovels to our hearts' content and gaze off at the sky-line or toward an occasional aeroplane, *but we must not sit down.* This rule seems to be general among bosses, and many workers will not give him a chance to find 'em at it. Whenever possible I have tested it and usually found it drew a call-down. Here it brought a gob of mud from the boss,

followed by a firm but decent call-down, and, finally, on the second offense, a threat of firing.

Where men are being paid for purely muscular energy, the wisdom of this prohibition is certainly to be questioned. Surely an occasional "spell" or sit-down could be permitted in a way that would secure a bigger day's work for the company than the usual day of unbroken, but extremely low-speed effort—especially if tried with a higher type of gang boss than seems common. There is mighty little reason to be afraid of trying this miner's system of hard-work-and-hard-loaf instead of the common half-work-and-half-loaf because it may smack of the new-fangled "scientific management." The idea is a very old one in this country. Away back in 1650 it seems that heavy canoe loads of furs were brought down the Great Lakes from Mackinac Island and such trading forts by crews who paddled hard for a certain distance, and then, on the call of "Pipes! Pipes!" rested and smoked for a few delicious moments—and so made long runs with the minimum of fatigue. Without doubt, that plan came as the result, not of theory, but of experience.

Even when this boss was near we three new ones took our time, and it's a certainty that all of the thirty or so other shovellers did. When we could not see him from the corner of our eyes, we all let down a notch or two in our "delivery" and increased the frequency of our arm-on-shovel-handle loafing. Many times as I loafed I noticed that every single shovel was similarly poised and motionless.

But even at that, we did a good day's work as such things go, and moved a lot of mud—and the point is, we did it without friction, without being yelled at, and with the feeling that we were being given good attention; as for instance, by the ice-water boy when it grew warm. But I think the boss's easy, quiet way was responsible for the general good

cheer—and for my surprise, too, at this moment, to find myself a chap whose self-respect is less hurt by the mud than by many foremen's curses, and whose shoulders and arms are not sore, in spite of handling all the ooze and stuff the husky Pole passed up to me.

Perhaps I ought to add that some of the good cheer of the gang was at my expense. Evidently a full beard suggests to this bunch of buddies more a goat than a human; all morning and occasionally after dinner "baa-baa" kept going from one side to the other of the acre-big marsh. When not otherwise employed, I waved my hand to show the lack of any hard feelings, and to my near-by shovellers, mostly Italians, made an alibi for the cause of the fuss:

"You see, me father's English, but me mother she was French, and the French are great for beards. Yes, I parlez-vous and si-parla a little."

So far the beard has at least made everybody think I'm either foreign or queer—and in either case has given sufficient reason for my being in the labor gang. And no American-born who is not thought queer or overthirsty will be seen there day after day or week after week without having his purpose suspected—and his ability to get answers to his questions thereby ended. So the beard has helped.

The day's restings and walkings from the plant to the field gave many chances at conversation:

The Soldier:

"After two years of savin' the country, it's tough to come down to this. . . . I'd try to get back my old job before the war but I ain't so strong as I was then. . . . Naw, the army life weakened me. We got plenty o' sleep and the work wasn't bad. But the eats, I'll say they was fierce—I dont' want any more army life in mine. . . . Prohibition? 'Course there ain't no kick—yet. A fellow can still get beer, and, if he knows the barkeep, the other stuff, too. Nobody wants the hard stuff in hot weather, but just you

wait till the cold nights come, and then if they can't get it there'll be some holler!"

Thomas, the colored man (heavy set, mustache, sensible face, good voice):

"Yessir, in lots o' companies we'd 'a' been laid off to-day and otha men hired for this job." (He went off with another group to a second job—on which only half stayed.) "Durin' the war was the great time heah—a man got lots o' overtime; sometimes a fella could work two shifts if he wanted to, and many's the time Ah got double time for Sundays. The war was shuah a great time foh money—if a fella could stand the wo'ak. . . . No, Ah don't like this Saturday-afternoon-off idea. Ah wants work—and mah family shuah wants it foh me."

"*Slim*," also colored (a good barrel-rustler, with his long arms and willing disposition):

"Color line? Why they ain't no color-line around heah. Dey treats a black man fine—the best place Ah evah worked. If any boss calls you 'niggah' you reports him, and if it's true, out he goes. Ah been hyah a year now—with good wages and steady work—all but six weeks when the labor strike was on at the Junction, and dey couldn't handle no moah freight from us."

Later he and I walked to the street-car past the line of sisters of charity and begging men displaying their withered or missing arms or legs as the workers from one department folded their two weeks' pay into their pockets.

"It's sumpin' fierce!" exclaimed Slim. "Every pay-day dey's all hyah wantin' some o' youah good money. Befoh yo' gets outa hyah somebody shuah to say every pay-day: 'What's youah numba?' 'What foh yo' wants ma numba,' yo' asks 'em, 'n dey say: 'Well, the boss's or the super's motha done died and we wants fifty cents from everybody.' And he gettin twice and moah as much's yo' gettin'! And cou'se yo' gotta give it, too. S'fierce! . . .

"No—Ah ain't takin' no cah to-day but Ah reckons Ah will to-morrow when *we* gets paid. Ah done run shoaht dis time 'cause de kids done woah out two pairs o' shoes befoh Ah'd expected 'em to—mah pay check foh two weeks runs about fohty-seven dollahs after takin' out five dollahs foh a Liberty Bond. Dat's pretty good for a regular eight-hour job. But, no sir, a fellah doan't want to give many fifty cents to nobody outa that—leastways not when he has to buy shoes 'n everything for his family dese days. . . . S'fierce, this beggin'."

I would have walked the mile over to the car line with him except that he joined some friends. The car service is so bad that most of the thousands of workers walk very long distances, and therefore have that much less energy for their labor jobs, besides having to add, most of them, I'd say, close to two hours for coming and going on to the eight hours required for making their living.

With the help from the shower-bath here at the "Y" (fifty cents a day—I just had to take it that day after the other boss and the heat nearly killed me) I'm feeling surprisingly fit, but bed looks pretty good all the same. And though he was a very good foreman as foremen go, and made a decent job out of his mud-hole, still I hope we'll have orders enough to keep us busy with some more of those barrels to-morrow.

Tankton,
July 10.

Every day makes plainer the wisdom of studying the gang boss and keeping an eye out for him with the zeal so many of my companions have shown and have constantly urged on me as a beginner. After all, he's the man that counts. Right or wrong, it's his say-so that makes the day into heaven or hell and the future rosy or rank. If he hasn't eyes to see a certain line of performance which you figure good, you might as well let it go; it will get you no-

where. If some other line of action seems to make a hit with him, go to it, and go to it strong.

To-day my soldier-buddy of yesterday's mud-hole had the job of ushering up the barrels to the scales—we were all tickled, when we got busy at seven, to learn that the day meant barrels instead of boots and shovels. He was inexperienced and he had to do a lot of running back and forth, stooping the while he pushed and rolled his charges. All morning he kept going—so did I, of course, but with less wear and tear. By noon his "tongue was hanging out," and we agreed that the slow shovelling of the day before was less exhausting. He had spoken several times to the boss asking for another man to push the barrels part way to him but had got no satisfaction. His neck ached, he said, "bad enough to kill a horse." He seemed to me a hard worker, and a willing one; as I saw it, he was a little too conscientious in giving a lot of small pushes instead of a few big ones.

At the noon-hour the boss and I fell into conversation, and I kept my promise to speak a word for my hard-pressed Jerry. I was amazed at the reply:

"That fellow! Why he's a loafer, that's all he is. He's lyin' down on his job, and if he don't do better I'll have to let him go—I told him so, too!"

When I argued that all he needed was a little more "know-how" and would be worth a little instruction—that he was taking it too seriously and running and stooping too much, I got nowhere, or rather, I quickly found I stood a big chance of getting in bad myself. So in amazement I saw I could do nothing, and let the matter drop. Which one of us is right, I don't know. But I do know that *his* opinion is the only one that counts.

It seems plain, too, that in many, many cases the best will in the world is not enough—or at least is not quick enough—to overcome a man's inexperience in time to pre-

vent the boss's marking him down as a shirker. And when once that mark has been made it is too often so hard to get it rubbed out that the worker finds that he might just as well live up—that is, down—to it. I'm sure, too, that lots of workers start in by really caring, by having the want-to spirit. But the effectiveness of this is, of course, largely lessened by the lack of skill in the job, by the lack of the know-how. By the time this lack has been ended under the ordinary boss's training (or lack of it), the man has the know-how but has lost the want-to, and the situation, on the whole, considering the best interests of both the company and the man, is worse than it was at first. At any rate, whenever I've been the victim of an experienced but careless automobile mechanic, I've always decided that my own inexperience, tempered by my desire for results, would have done the engine less harm than the expert's know-how tainted by his lack of interest.

I "mind me," also, of the days back there on the open-hearth. By the time I got so I was pretty handy with the shovel and could make the dolomite stick on that fiery and shimmering white cliff of the furnace's back wall, I had been cursed so much in the presence of my friends that I was too ashamed and mad to *use* my skill effectively. After a few days this would, I presume, have worn off if my month had not then been up. But I wager that many workers quit at just exactly that point—to the saving of their own "face" and self-respect but to the company's loss.

"Naw, I ain't married," another boss said a few days ago. "I can't see nothin' in that. And some of the women are such fools. . . . W'y last fall I was visitin' a sick friend who had to have the room so dark you couldn't see nothin' —at least *he* couldn't—and what does the nurse do but come and sit on my lap—and I never seen her before! When my line of talk stopped sudden-like—she fair took my

breath away—my sick friend he asks what was the matter, and I pushed her off as decent as I could and started on again with what I was sayin'. They make me sick! Give me a good boxin' bout or a cock-fight. I used to belong to a club that had swell affairs of that sort. Sometimes they began at one o'clock in the mornin'. That's the life! No women and no booze for mine!"

Some of his unrepeatable stories seem to support my growing belief that the absence of the finer social delicacies of conversation and conventionality among the uneducated means the levelling of a wall which serves to protect the morals of the more polite part of modern society to a degree we are not likely to appreciate unless we know both groups well. Still others of his tales give good support to another of my observations along this line of human relationships—namely, that one result of long hours and the fatigue and overwork of manual laborers is a lessened interest in the moral relationships within the bounds of wholesome matrimony and a proportionately heightened interest in the more challenging and exciting conquests outside. Almost every day seems to bring confirmation of the belief that, especially among the workers who find in their work comparatively small chance for the moral satisfaction of "getting on" and "counting"—of self-respect—there is vastly more psychology in their morals or, rather, their immorals, than has been heretofore appreciated. If that is true, the improvement of working hours and conditions could be expected to bring an improvement—or at least a chance for an improvement—of the workers' morals. But more of that later—especially if I get any more confirmations like to-day.

Education is, apparently, understood by all the workers to have a lot to do with the quality of the job and the opportunities for "getting on."

"Aw, I didn't care nothin' about it. I wanted to get

doin' somethin'—to earnin' money! I got through the eighth grade," say nearly all of the barrel-hammering lads. Very few of them claim they *had* to stop, and none expresses any regret.

It looks as though somebody's doing a poor job of persuading these youngsters to any desire for any large amount of education. And still, as I say, they seem to feel, unlike my cold-roll buddy there in the sheet-mill, that there should be a connection between a good education and a good job. This afternoon in a moment's pause I was telling one lad that I stuck through high school. He shot back at me, quick as a flash, with great scorn:

"And then you're here workin' in a factory!"

The local "Y" advertises throughout the plant its classes in a variety of practical studies. I'm inclined to think their enrollment is likely to depend on the number of times the boys are able to observe the foreman promoting those who take them. Otherwise such effort is sure to look like fancy stuff.

The "Y" also sends the song leader and the accompanist who plays on the little transportable organ noon-hours one day a week in each of the various departments. That gets good results. Last Monday the bosses and the boys sang well, besides making every late-comer take off his hat and join in on the familiar tunes. Later, all the boys kept singing at their barrels far into the afternoon. My buddy propped up the printed words on the little barrel where he sometimes sat, and in between rollings of barrels he would turn 'round, lean down, and, beating the time with his hand, sing the words from the sheet. It certainly made us all better workers.

Tankton,
July 11.

Barrels, barrels, and more barrels, thousands of barrels chasing each other over my scales and past my stencil and

brush—so it has gone all day, except for the time taken to go over to the doctor's for examination.

He surely does give the genuine article. He has a right to, for that matter, considering that the company gives substantial life and health insurance and other advantages, based on length of service, without asking any contribution from the men. After a long wait (at fifty-three cents per hour) my turn came to join two others in his office, where we were told to strip. After we took our turns in giving our pedigree and genealogy, the doctor gave us each the most thorough and careful examination imaginable. When he was through, my card read "Class A-1, fit for any kind of work."

"Yes," said one of the two young clerks, "quite a number just turn and walk out when we tell 'em to strip—and, of course, that's the last we or the company sees of 'em. But mostly they make no kick. Once in a while we make somebody go and be operated on—for instance, for rupture—before we'll take him on, but he sees the point and is stronger for it.

"Lots of times, too, the boys are in trouble, and we try to get 'em to quit the quacks and follow good advice. Only yesterday we tried to do that with a young ex-soldier, and all he did was to get mad and walk out and off the job. Too bad; we wanted to help him."

My memory recalled the very rough journeyman roll-turner back there in the sheet-mill last winter. I had been afraid he would spot me—up to the moment when he turned to me at the boarding-house table and said:

"No, siree, I wouldn't stay there if I had to have a doctor lookin' me over. That's all right, y' understand, for these here hunkies and for'ners—but it ain't nothin' for self-respectin' workin' men like you and me."

The number of such "conscientious objectors"—or of overmodest ones—could probably be made still smaller if

only one worker was allowed in the room at a time, with one instead of two clerks. It could not have been pleasant for the big colored boy to hear his particular disease named for the clerk's record in the hearing of us all. It would help, also, if the booklet explaining the insurance were not handed a man *after* he's been examined, with the words:

"It's somethin' like that, I think. Anyway, you can read all about it in this booklet—*I haven't read it yet myself.*"

But speaking of barrels, barrels—"Hey there! Push along them barrels!" Before and after the examination I stood all day before the scales like a painter in his studio, black brush in one hand and brass number-stencil for a palette in the other. It certainly is monotonous. But I can't make out that that makes it particularly disagreeable—in a way, rather the opposite. I find I can get the right weights painted on quickly and still think of many things or, what is more to the point, think, if I try hard enough, of one particular line or train of thought—and arrive somewhere with it, too. I'm not sure that my fellow-workers occupy their minds that way, but if they don't it is partly because they don't mind the monotony and partly because they're given comparatively little that's worth thinking about. I'm inclined to think that the boys would give more lasting attention to worth-while stuff put in their minds, say, by company movies—or by near-technical problems—than I would, because there would be fewer other competing interests. Those songs last Monday, for instance, kept going on the boys' lips nearly all the afternoon. Perhaps, too, a plant paper or magazine could definitely plan to stimulate some of the men's thinkings while at work, by occasionally publishing them. Few would complain at all about the monotony, I'm sure, if all were encouraged to give a sympathetic foreman suggestions for improving the process, and then were made to feel that this would be tied up with an active, well-planned system of recognitions for promotions

and transfers. It is monotonous work plus lack of opportunity for personal recognition that makes a bad combination, so far as I can judge.

This is the kind of thing the workers' committee should tackle—after it has got some of the easy things out of the way—and long before it gets around to meeting only once in several months, as a member tells me it does here.

To all those workers here who know anything about this committee plan, the big thing seems to be the protection it gives a man against the unfair boss:

"If he says 'get outa here,' you just go to your delegate and he lays the case before the committee."

This testimony supports my observations that the steadiness and the security of the job are second only to wages. In that case much of the advantage of the committee must be offset by the company's frequent mention of a long list of causes for which men may be discharged without notice and without appeal.

Nothing but the non-enforcement of this list would give any one the slightest security or permanency, with committee or without. As a matter of fact, these rules are not enforced, and the foremen are able apparently only to send men back to the hiring office for transfer, as in my case. Current rumor says, too, that the company plans to pay well above the prevailing rates of wage.

On the whole the company would pretty surely be chosen by any worker who spent, say, a week in the town sizing up the various employers by talking with the workers in the saloons and elsewhere—and such conversations are surprisingly numerous. Whether it is conscious of it or not, every corporation has a pretty definite character given it in the small talk of the working community. The surprising thing is how generally this character agrees with the one given the same company by those having big commercial dealings with it. Time after time I find a poor employer

has the reputation of an inefficient or a slippery business man, and vice versa.

This evening we got our pay—and it covered time up to three days previous. As we came out past the mute appeals of the sisters and the mutilated begging workers and children, there seemed a surprising amount of generosity.

Except for the absence of whiskey the corner saloon seems still very busy. It is certainly the worker's club. I imagine the same group gets together more or less at the same time. But, in any case, the foot on the brass rail is sufficient introduction to any other member—with whom you are free to introduce any subject you please, especially if the liquid stuff is "on you." I notice, though, that the club dues are continuous, unless the barkeep is too busy, or asleep at the switch. This evening, for instance, when a group got so busy talking that they were slow in getting their repeat orders in, Mr. Barkeep would gather up the glasses at what he thought proper intervals to represent due rental for the space they were occupying on the brass railing, and, with the emphasis of a switch of his towel across the wet bar:

"Which is it, gents, large or small, light or dark?"

And they knew they had to give the right answer or break up their party.

Birch beer is on draught and is very good. Maybe it will help make the whole scheme possible after the ban on the other drinks is enforced. On the whole, it is to be hoped so. The news is that one reason for the growth of the I. W. W. on the Pacific coast is that that organization has been live enough to fit up clubs which, in the absence of the saloon, attract the lumberjack when he comes to town—attract and finally enlist him.

Perhaps the I. W. W. keeps going because its programme supplies some of the excitement formerly supplied by old John Barleycorn. Most of the bone-dry votes at the

A. F. of L. Convention in Atlantic City came from the red-headed Western delegates. As one chap put it, the day before the Fourth:

"How the devil are you goin' to celebrate without any booze?"

He was the same one who lifted his hat whenever a breeze came during those broiling afternoons with: "I'll be hanged if that ain't almost as good as a schooner o' suds."

It looks as if more thought should be given to arranging for the new saloonless conditions—perhaps not so much with patent substitutes of an entirely new sort as with the extension of some of the others, such as the soft-drink emporium, the neighborhood athletics—with daylight saving—the movie, the club, the school, etc.

A few days ago, by the way, a half-drunken sailor and I got together by means of the bar's free masonry. He was still proud of his strong right arm and his general huskiness as an able-bodied seaman, but:

'No, never go back to old home in Norway. . . . My mother—yes, to her I could talk and she understand. To brothers and sisters—no, to them I could not talk . . . no, not even in fine suit of clothes. . . . You see in all twelf' year since—in all that time—never do I say one word with good, decent woman. Something gone"—putting his hand to his heart—"something gone *here*."

Well, I wonder how I'll be handled when I try to get the money due me on those three last days—so that I can wander on to pastures new. That seems to be a pretty good test of an employer.

Tankton,
July 13th, 1919.

A plum to the pay-master's department! It met the test very well, and the money was shortly in my hands, just as if they thought I had earned it.

Chanced last night onto the red-haired, small-faced but

husky-armed Pat who worked in the gang at the "Pitch-house." Says he:

"Yes, O'im still with that boss because a friend o' mine tells me he'll soon have a good place with him. But Oi will say this—if me woife hadn't died an left me wid a kid to look after, Oi'd be hanged if Oi wouldn't take the chance o' twenty years in the pen for brainin' that slave-driver. Why, that man ain't human, he ain't—an' he don't deserve to live alongside o' humans—not he."

So before leaving to-day I told the super's man—in rough language—that I seriously believed, both from personal experience and from general testimony, that this boss would in all probability some day be killed by some worker, driven, as I was, to desperation. His answer was amazing—that that was *outside his field!* He said I would have to see his chief—which I didn't have time to do. Why should I give two hours to saving the man's life! I suppose I'll never know if my prophecy comes true. If it does, it may give pleasurable occupation to the plant policemen. A good many of them look as though they'd be happiest when most strenuous in the use of their clubs. No wonder that the rawhiding foreman sticks on the job if any official side-steps hearing about him that way.

But, on the whole, the place would be considered pretty much as a man, who looked like a fairly successful skilled worker, put it last night down on the beach after his intelligent dog served to open conversation:

"A job there is O. K. If you make good they're pretty likely to notice you and push you along. I had a chance to go there fifteen years ago. Sorry now I didn't take it. My friends who did have good places now. Furthermore, everybody there's got a job six days a week if he wants it—and no fear the company's goin' to blow up before pay-day. . . . Now at that company over there," pointing to a near-by shipyard, "I wouldn't take a place a friend of-

fered me. 'Your main job,' he says to me, 'is to dodge the boss.' Then he tells me just how to look out for him, and just what others I was to walk away from and keep out of sight of. That's no business for an honest man. I couldn't see it—besides, I guess it isn't goin' to last long now."

From that we passed on to dogs and the way they behave according to their feelings, just like people: "Well, after he bit the baby I had to get rid o' the pup, and I tried to do it without bein' unkind to him, you understand. But when he come back to the house again one day, I just told him plain that he was yellow, and that I never wanted to see him again. Well, that dog just turned and walked away, and after that when he'd be runnin' by and I'd speak to him, he'd kinda stop and give me a stony look, you know, and go on again as though he'd never seen me or heard o' me."

It is a constant surprise how the wearing of worker clothes—or, maybe, it is the thinking of worker thoughts or the feeling of worker interests—seems to make it easy to enter into such conversations—conversations which go with surprising quickness to the heart of matters. Beginning with the dog or the job, it seems very shortly to come around to the son just back from war, the daughter just married, or the sickly wife, and then on to the disappointments or the triumphs of the past and the dreams of the future. And that "heart of matters," wherever found, always seems very human and very normal—once its difficulties are understood—and very wholesome.

I wonder what interesting group of humans my lot will be lined up with next.

Shoptown,
July 16.

The fine red-tiled buildings and the handsome fence made me expect good treatment as I started through the artistic iron gate of the huge steel-plant. As often before,

under the same circumstances, the plant policeman broke up the picture! He started to close the big gate in my face, and to save his breath waved me back. In order to make him pay me the compliment of something besides signs I stood my ground till he finally shouted:

"Over there! Over there! Can't you see? Over there, to the door!"

When I went in and with proper humility asked about a job, he sent me across to a little brick shanty where another but younger, fatter, and more agreeable policeman sat sweating and meditating in his uncollared shirt-sleeves, while his capacious tummy tried to overflow the boundaries of his khaki trousers.

"We've nothing I know of," he said when he had heard my story, "except the labor gang—and there's no use you're takin' that because you won't stay in it—it's nothing but 'niggers' and the lowest foreigners.

"You say you're married—and kids? Well, now, the head of the forge department was lookin' for a boy, but mebbe you'd do."

He called him up, gave me a good "rep" over the phone and asked him to send over a boy for me. Before he arrived I observed how like a jail the small room was, where applicants were supposed to wait, separated from the policeman by a cell-like, iron-mesh door.

Though I tried my best, the foreman could not be persuaded to let me substitute a high-school education for actual experience in figuring temperatures, etc.

On the way back and out it was thrilling to see the huge steel forgings of various weights up to sixty and more tons being heated in the furnaces built especially for them, or being forged into huge, compact, hexagonal shapes at the colossal hydraulic presses while the men up in the cranes skilfully engineered them back and forth across the mammoth anvils.

At a near-by machine-shop a policeman interrupted his jollying of the girls passing out—it was five o'clock—sufficiently to answer, "Nothing till to-morrow at eight. Yes, we're taking men on all right."

Inside, one of the clerks stopped to hear my question and then carefully and coolly looked me over from top to toe before vouchsafing:

"Can't say whether there'll be a job or not, but you be sure to be here at nine o'clock. . . . No, I can't say, but you be here and we'll see."

In the corner saloon the bartender referred my question to a customer who was a boss in the steel company.

"Well, if you're skilled, the machine-shop's the best, otherwise the steel-plant. But you've got to turn up at both places in the morning—nothin' doin' at this time o' day. You be there in that room by the gate, at seven to-morrow, and we bosses'll come down and look over the bunch and take on any one we need. That policeman you saw—he can't do no hirin'—not he. . . . Yep, they're about 2,000 men workin' now. The startin' rate for labor's thirty-eight or forty cents. But the hirin's all up to us bosses, don't forget that."

Such arrangements for so large a company in these days seems to justify the bad reputation which this same company's main plant had among the working population back at S——, and which its national officials seem to have among steel manufacturers.

Such arrangements—or lack of them—of course, favor the doing of the day's hiring at one specific hour. Where, as seems sometimes to happen, this hour is the same for most of the plants in the locality, the seeker for a job must try hard to guess which one offers the best chance for him, because after he waits at one gate for that hour he has lost his chance for the entire day at *all* gates. So far, I have found it practically impossible to learn from any one at

any gate any idea as to the probable comparative chances of successful results from the wait. All urge, "No, I can't say—but don't fail to be on hand."

It is a certainty that the men who day after day guess without success the proper gate and so continue jobless, come closer to being Bolshevists than any others not yet signed up on the society's rolls. It looks to me as though the employer who nowadays opposes any kind of State or interstate employment bureau, and insists that the ideal situation is the one by which he can find fifty men outside his gate every morning for every five or ten jobs, is asking the country to let him play with matches where the tinder is dryest.

"Comrades, listen! Thousands of men are now out of work. Now quick, before they get jobs, is the time for us to get their attention for our gospel. Fill out the cards with their names and we'll do the rest"—was the appeal of the secretary of the Bolshevist-Socialist group there in Steelville last spring.

I'll wager that secretary had himself waited at many gates—and knew what he was talking about.

CHAPTER IX

IN THE IRON-MINES

JUST when should iron be called steel or semi-steel? This question seems to have bothered the experts a good deal. Certainly the workers themselves in the plants use the words almost interchangeably, as has perhaps been noticed in earlier pages.

But, in any event, the time spent in working with ore and "pig" and "metal" in the open-hearth or "soft iron" in the sheet-mills creates a curiosity to see the district in which the whole process starts with the removal of the ore from the ground. A temporary return to white collars—soft—permitted a glimpse of one's family and a slight vacation during the trip up the Great Lakes. Down the great highway these afford, travels each year the huge flood of something like 60,000,000 tons of the yellow "dirt" needed for the strengthening and the building up of our industrial and commercial structure.

At the head of the lakes it was easy again to don the unshaved countenance of the man that needs a job, and again to ask and observe—and especially to listen.

The Iron Ranges of Minnesota,
July 25th, 1919.

It is easy to believe that the Minnesota iron-ore development, unlike, for instance, Texas oil, profited few farmers. The reason is that the deposits were found soon after the timber had been exploited and before any number of settlers had arrived. The trip up here from Duluth is mainly through cut-over and burned-over wild country, apparently

filled just now with blueberries and blueberry pickers until you strike the iron country. Then the landscape is full of great, deep gashes where the hundreds of train-loads of ore have been taken out and started down the lakes to the blast furnaces of Chicago, Gary, Cleveland, Youngstown, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, etc.

Here are the results of the days of job-seeking:

—— Company—nearly three miles walk from town. Great difficulty in finding the mine captain, who was dimly visible at the bottom of a very deep "open-pit." There the ore was being loaded by a huge and very busy steam-shovel into a car which moved a short distance to dump it through its track into the hoist-cars, which then brought it up and dumped it into railway-cars for Duluth. A worker volunteered that the lease would run out in a few months, so the mine could offer a man only a poor job because a short one. Occasionally sharp whistle-blasts from the shovel in a near-by pit gave warning, and the workers walked to little round steel shelters just before a series of enormous explosions threw up smoke and rocks and shook the whole country-side.

The mine captain, when finally found, shook his head:

"No, can't take on a single man of any sort—got too many now and will have to lay off some soon."

—— Iron Co. The employment manager was very willing to talk:

"All I can give you is track-laying. Ten hours with time and a half for over eight hours makes it $4.85 a day. You keep laying the track wherever necessary for the shovel to go to dig out the stuff for loading into the cars. We try to make everybody begin there and then keep pushing 'em up to pit-men who help with the shovel, firemen, and, finally, shovel-men. . . . No, shovel-men are day-men, not tonnage; they earn about twelve dollars. And we try to keep everybody busy the year around—some go down in our

underground mines in other parts of the range and keep building up the 'stock-pile' to be shipped in summer. . . . Yes, more Finns here than anything else. Some of 'em are splendid workers; some of 'em are impossible; they won't learn English or anything and are all for the I. W. W. stuff. The Poles are good husky workers. The Italians are good, too. During the war they started a strike, but we showed 'em they were helping the Germans and they called it off. Lots of the Italians and Austrians are going back to see what's happened. . . . Well, I have to bawl 'em *all* out pretty often—that's about all they understand, you know."

The company seems to be trying hard to further satisfactory relations with its men. Like all the other mines I saw, they furnish a wash-house with hot shower-baths and very good lockers. Then they offer a class for any group of applicants in any subject, employ a visiting nurse, promote baseball, aid an employees' club which is a sort of "Y" without the religious element. A poster spoke of representation on a small co-operative committee to handle complaints against foremen and such matters, but it did not speak of elections by the men, and was not mentioned by the employment manager or by any of the workers. The company houses at the edge of town seem well cared for, with certainly low rents—from eight to fifteen dollars.

This town or village is always in plenteous funds, owing to the tax laid on the assessed value of the precious ore. The streets are paved with wood-block and lined with thick clusters of electric lights. The fire department is the last word of rubber-tired motors. The school buildings are fine and, what's more, start even their grade teachers at one hundred dollars per month! They have night classes, advisers in vocational guidance, visiting nurses, baby clinics, and almost everything else imaginable. The national or State Y. W. C. A. supports an Americanization worker who covers the chief towns. The town library is well housed,

always open and hospitable—has story hours for the children and all such "modern appliances." And instead of waiting for people to come to it, it goes to them by establishing branches at two convenient points on the main street, besides others on the outskirts. One of these is meant particularly for the workers, and kept always unlocked day and night—provided with spittoons, toilet facilities, etc. Its librarian had been a machinst and millwright whose life, like that of so many workers, had been changed by sickness—in his case, tuberculosis.

"Anybody can die of it, you know, but most anybody can live, too, if he'll fight like I fought."

He was very proud of his always keeping peace among his rough-handed readers and living up to the dignity and other requirements of his job:

"As high as 150 of 'em in here at one time, sir, and never no trouble. . . . I'll stand most any abuse from 'em inside here, 'cause this is my job—I'm paid to stand for it. But I had a fellow in here the other day who stepped out on the street and called me names from there! Straight off, I had him arrested!"

A small but tight-skinned and muscular fellow fell into the conversation, and after the librarian turned out the lights we continued to talk. In the dark his little eyes gleamed to remind me of a rat's, and he kept hitching up his coat to make it settle better, and rubbed his nose with the back of his fingers as though he might be a "coke" fiend, though his talk gave no hint of it. He proved to be a lumber-jack, apparently in funds and taking a little loaf in town after several weeks of casual labor in Duluth. His talk showed him surprisingly thoughtful and reasonable. If he found himself in a lumber camp where the food was rotten, bedbugs prolific, ventilation bad, a bath impossible, the boss mean, and the cook distilling alcohol, he would probably follow the I. W. W. organizer without much compunction.

He did not report any one camp as showing all of these incitements, but told of various partial combinations of the list.

"Wages are bein' cut now from the 'fifty-five dollars and found' a month a lumberman gets, with five dollars or ten dollars more for sawin' and drivin', but products seems to be goin' higher. Some of the camps, I will say, are gettin' a lot better—and that's a good thing, too. In some the eats are wonderful."

He thinks he is too old to learn millwrighting or any similar trade now, though he is not yet out of his thirties.

"No, I've never had no chance at that sort o' thing—not where I could earn anything like enough while I was learnin', you understand."

Iron Range Country,
July 26th.

A busy day.

One captain I found underground after going down the side of the cut and walking in through the passage to "the bottom," 160 feet below top surface. . . . He could offer no work, but he very considerately let me go along through the different passages. The miners working "at the face" had carbide lamps—there is no gas in these mines—and certainly needed their rubber boots. The timbering required of them looked very difficult for the thirteen-foot vein. The shovelling is, of course, a lot heavier than in soft coal. An average of nine dollars for an eight-hour day seems to be considered very good.

The captain is a young man of foreign parents—light-haired and friendly eyed—who has made good use of ambition, application, and correspondence schools.

"We think we move men along faster than in the other companies, but we don't push any but American-born onto the shovels or other machines. We contrive to give very steady work to everybody. And even when we find a man

getting a great big stake out of some location we've given him we never, never cut our rate to him—as too many companies do. Oftentimes we have to raise the rate where the goin's bad. When there was a big strike up here two years ago our men stuck by us. . . . We don't believe in loud-talking bosses—if they don't get a man to work by leading him into it we fire the man—or the boss. . . . Yes, there's some danger here even after the State makes all its inspections. In one mine in the district a mass of rock came down when lightning 'pre-exploded' a score or more of tons of powder that had been planted and ready. If all of the thirty charges had gone off instead of ten, it would have killed fifty instead of eighteen men. I don't see how it could have been prevented."

"The captain?—oh, he's square and everybody likes him. You gotta give him a fair day's work, but he's decent about it," said a well-trimmed young chap who kept the wash-house.

"I'm as old as he is, but I guess I'll never be a mine captain. . . . Well, for one thing I like booze too much. . . . Get it? Sure you can get it. Why, a man I know here made $15,000 in one year of blind-piggin'. He has a swell auto now. His wife had to spend the whole day takin' the stuff down to the store in the baby-buggy. At the end of the year he was caught and had to pay a fine. 'Twas fifty dollars! . . . But I live with my aunt here and I wouldn't bring it here, so a friend and I go over to other 'dry' towns and get enough for a good time. That's why I don't save. A fellow can save if he wants to in one of them lumber camps, but most of 'em move on as soon as they get a 'Michigan stake' of forty dollars or so. Some do nothin' but stay for two or three meals without workin' and then go on to the next camp. But timber's no job—too many lice, too rough. . . . Unions? Well, I'm sore on 'em. When I was makin' eight and nine dollars in a lum-

ber mill up there, they come along and proposed boostin' some of the unskilled men and kids in a way that sure was foolish. And it didn't get anybody anywheres, either, then, though they may try it again later. . . . Here?—it's a good place here—five dollars per for my job—eight hours. Lots o' fellows a' been here a long time and they all swear by it. If you don't believe they live well and dress well, take a look in their dinner-pails this noon or go and see the white shirts in the lockers over there."

On the way back to town a Slovenian worker on crutches, unshaved, sick and sad looking, told of his accident in the mine, and seemed very hopeless about getting much compensation money from the State fund:

"Twelf' or fifteen dollar week not much—not for family man."

He had been a year or more with nearly every company and was equally unenthusiastic about them all.

At R——, a few miles distant, a fireman's tournament was under way—with the supposedly dry saloons openly selling whiskey, with chuck-a-luck and other gambling games going on everywhere.

The superintendent of the biggest mine there seemed very intelligent and wholesome: besides, sympathetic toward my condition.

"We've got nothing here for you. Sorry. . . . No, we have no rules requiring a man to start in any certain work. We try to place them according to our needs and push them as they deserve. —— Company, I understand, has classes on mining, but nobody can be a captain there unless he's an engineer. . . . Yes, *some* foreigners are as ambitious as you'd want. We won't let anybody be a foreman unless he has his papers; we find those in his gang who have theirs feel superior to him. . . . Well, I claim no nationality is either good or bad. They're mixed and you've got to treat 'em as individuals—and treat 'em square.

I don't see any signs of trouble here now—at least not among our 350 men."

As might be expected from such a man, the "stock pile" showed a good supply of ore from the continuous underground and inside work of the preceding winter. With good luck it would be shipped down the lakes before navigation closed, when the men could be kept steadily on the job again replenishing it, and the whole place showed very good care and attention.

At another big mine near by the swarthy, heavy-set mine captain pulled his long mustache with the fingers of reminiscence and said he had mined almost everywhere and wouldn't return to soft coal "if they gave me the whole country."

"Oh, sure, you can take care o' yourself all right where the gas is, but how do you know but what some fool down the entry is goin' to send you all to kingdom-come with his ignorance or carelessness? That's what I allus used to keep thinkin'."

"I'd have to start you in with a gang timberin'," he said finally. "That's $5.25 for eight hours and pretty hard work, too. The fellows that mine are mostly foreign and prefer buddies of their own nationality—though they do work best under an American boss. But if I was you I'd start in the open pits; there it's nothin' but practically railroadin'."

Though he used ore instead of coal terms—for instance, "back" instead of "roof"—he had many memories of his coal days, especially of some mules he had known.

"I mind me o' one driver who could 'sic' his mule onto anybody—and you had to climb outa there quick, too. . . . Aw, they're a bad lot—them mules—and I'm glad we have nothin' but electricity up here. I know one boy had trained his animal but never trusted him an instant durin' two years, till one day—for some reason—he got careless and picked up a whip by the beast's heels. That is, he

tried to. He got it right in the stomach—died in an hour."

He is sure his company are the best employers on the range.

A young Swedish boiler-maker waited along with me for the train back to town. He has recently set up for himself and is evidently not making it very well—is consequently rather sore on things.

"I can't bring on my family from Montana because there are no houses anywhere except at L——. At M—— they're paying eighteen dollars a month for one room and living in tents. But at that I may jump the whole blamed country. . . . Oh, yes, I used to work for that outfit, but never again! Why, they're reg'lar slave-drivers. Every second man in the place is a foreman or some kind of a boss. And even at that they can't give an ordinary worker much attention. One winter I went every day out of workin' in steam heat 'way above a hundred degrees out into the cold away below zero—with my wet underwear a-stickin' to me. After a few weeks o' that, all I felt like doin' an hour after goin' to work was to sit down. So I quit. . . . Overtime! I should say they do give a man overtime. Why, I tell you, I used to get checks there of more than $200—more'n $100 a week! But say! I was so busy and so tired that I didn't care a whoop about walkin' across the street to cash it! Just all in—done out. That's no life at all. No, sirree, never again will I work for them! The —— people I think are the best of all—square and ready to do the right thing. But to get on most anywhere, you've got to have a drag—or else marry the boss's daughter. . . . Boiler-makin's good work—you can average $8.50 a day. Of course you're too deef to hear anything at dinner, though it wears off soon after you stop the day's work. But it'll make you deef for life all right enough if you keep at it."

He got off at X——, after he had told me about that

town's wonderful schools, amusement building with a curling floor, and the great ski-jump incline just outside.

Before turning in I found my lumber-jack at the reading-room again. He is a surprisingly sane chap on many lines, considering that he has had no chances to see much normal life. "You see, they's no chance to meet decent girls when you must spend most o' your time in a lumber camp."

As we talked a boy joined us who had had his leg badly hurt at the —— Company. He seemed to feel that it was his own fault that he had not got a better settlement on it, and appeared enthusiastic about the company and the chance it gave for advancement.

Here comes a band—at bedtime and past! It's leading the baseball team which defeated B—— at a game begun at six-forty-five this evening. Daylight saving is a great affair, especially here in the north. Last night, about eight, a big crowd of us enjoyed a first-class game on the school grounds between fathers and sons.

It seems to be a great place for the youngsters—and not very bad for anybody else, so far as I can see.

P. S.—The evening paper tells that the school census shows fathers of 29 nationalities, with 175 more of them born Finns than Americans! Family life appears to be equally exciting for them all—an advertisement that "My wife has left my bed and board, so I will not be responsible for any bills" is signed by Husam Afghan!

Iron Ranges, Minn.,
July 27.

At one open-pit mine in L—— this morning the red-haired superintendent was shy on work, but obligingly long on information. It seems fairly easy for a wanter of work to talk with the boss, because the office is usually out in the country where a stranger seems interesting even if he looks as tough as I do.

He is sure the Finns who make trouble are the latest over; the best ones are those who came some thirty years ago or so, at the time of a temperance movement in Finland, and brought their temperance societies with them—a fine lot of workers. If he is right, it means that most of the agitation in the iron country has been caused by the victims of autocratic Russia's programme of ruthless treatment of the Finns contrary to its sacred promises. When these came over they brought that idea of government along with them. According to that, it looks as though all governments, like all employers, are in the same boat—with the sins of one visited on all the others. Apparently, the labor problem must be viewed as not merely a national but an international problem.

According to him, the town's schools and other advantages are taken as a matter of course by all the foreign-born, with none of them interested nowadays in doing a good day's work.

"I started out tryin' to treat 'em fine and make 'em my friends, but after they'd thrown me down a few times when I asked 'em to work overtime, I cut it out. Now I try to be square, but show 'em there's to be no foolin'—and they do pretty well for me. At least they're anxious to do overtime work."

He is more for rough treatment of his men than any other superintendent or captain met on the range, and, it is significant and important to add, more fearful of trouble. I'll wager quite a lot he's lonesome and unhappy—and therefore unduly pessimistic about things and, especially, people.

The town's other mine is shut down—all the officials out of town. Some children assured me that their fathers and most of the others who regularly worked there were now busy in near-by mines. They also are enthusiastic about their schools and their teachers.

A lean, unshaven, but shrewd-looking young merchant

fell easily to mentioning with pride both the buildings he had earned and also a twelve-thousand-dollar loss he had been able to weather in an unlucky mine venture out West. He thinks the workers are all pretty contented, with the town's prosperity good for at least fifty years more, because, so far, the mining companies are working only those properties on which they hold short leases, holding for later development their own properties. He was evidently bothered to place me. In a lull in the conversation I opined: "It's a great life if you don't weaken—and the devil if you do."

He took it for an opening, and came back:

"You've got a weakness, then, eh? . . . Booze, mebbe?"

A mine superintendent or captain at K——, a few miles farther on, is of a rough but substantial type, who had left railroading in a dull period, started firing on a steam-shovel, and worked from one position to another till his present success.

As of all the others, my inquiries about his way of handling his men—and some that work up are the ones who believe most in the "rough stuff"—were made in an offhand way after we had discussed the various jobs he might have for me. Here is the best stuff I've run into yet:

"I make it a rule never to send a man where I'm unwilling to go myself—or take any chances I'm leary of takin'. I've had only one man killed and that was his fault altogether. . . . I don't believe in talkin' rough with the men. When things are going fine I don't mind usin' considerable profanity. But when there's trouble and it's time for the men to do their best, then you never hear me swearin' or jawin'. Well, I guess, it's because I know I never do my best for anybody that tries to push *me* that way.

"If a man won't work without somebody swearin' at him, I take him to one side—never with others around—and say it's 'more work, Joe,' or get out.' If he stays he

knows for one thing I'll never cut a rate on him. . . . Yes, our company gives a super his head—if they don't trust him they don't keep him. The —— people don't do that. They have all sorts of bosses and officials, and everybody passes the buck to everybody else—till it gets down to the head office. And by that time it's too late and nothin's done. What is it they call it—yes, 'absentee management.' Bad stuff. . . . Give me my minin' underground—it's more interestin'; always some new information or something to figure out. Well, you come around Monday and maybe I can find a foreigner who'll take you on below ground for his buddy. So long."

A large part of Hibbing, the "richest village in the world," is being moved to Alice in order to permit stripping off the top dirt and getting at the rich deposits beneath. Even without this enlargement the town's pit is a world-beater! As you look across it, you think you have gauged its size correctly—until the locating of a distant whistle makes you focus your eyes on a train hitherto invisible halfway up the farther wall more than a mile and a half away! With its numerous shovels busily puffing and loading the red or yellow ore into the cars, and a score of engines laboring to pull these up the grade to the assembling train, it makes a good picture of industry's far-flung frontiers.

These steam-shovels are wonderful! For concentration on their job, commend me to them—as they bite into the side of the hill with their enormous maw, while the steam-puffings grow slower and slower as though all but foiled and exhausted, and the platform and "spar" quake with the threat of defeat—only to come through it triumphantly with the shovel full to overflowing and the exhaust singing joyously! Then, before you know it, the shovel has been raised and for the barest fraction of a second poised over the waiting car, the rope has been pulled to let the tons of ore fall through, and immediately the great mouth has been

swung down and at it again for another bite, its bottom swinging as it goes like some giant licking his chops in worker-like satisfaction.

Why doesn't somebody write the "Song of the Shovel"?

"Oh, I am the shovel, the Great Steam Shovel, earth opens at my command
And pours her treasure in fullest measure into man's open hand!"

Something like that it should go.

Before leaving town for Duluth I asked a husky but legless and half-fingered beggar if he was the same chap I had noticed in two other mine towns where they were celebrating. A moment later I sat down on my suit-case by his side so as to leave him and his open cap free for the passers-by and their dimes and nickels.

His red, weathered face lighted up surprisingly, and he showed a very friendly but quick pair of eyes, and a ready, conciliating tongue. All of these, I suppose, are important in giving him his chance to earn his daily income over an amazing part of the country's geography:

"Oh, yes, I try to be around at all such things as firemen's tournaments. But that was no good there yesterday. Motor equipment—that's drivin' the hook-and-ladder runners off the boards. . . . Sure, that keeps me movin'. To-day week I'll be at R—— in Wisconsin, a week later at ——, Iowa, and two weeks later at K——, North Dakota. . . . Oh, them's all circus days there. Ye see, I follow X——'s circus forty or fifty days every year—a fine bunch of boys they are, too. When it gets me out to Montana I'll beat it to a fine list of towns in Georgia and Florida. . . . Yes, the police in all them places know me and I just report at headquarters and say I'll be around for a coupla days, and they tell me they're glad to see me again and wish me

luck. (Thank you, ma'am, thank you, very kindly.) . . . Nope, nothin' doin' in any of the big eastern cities—they don't give me no show at all. . . . Well, it's about fifteen years I been doin' it. First, I just took the atlas and laid out a circular trip, and when I'd covered it once I knew the best places and then made 'em onct a year.

"These foreigners up here and the colored people down South—they're the ones that keep me goin'. If two American women come by and one edges my way, the other pulls her elbow and says, 'Why, he's makin' more than you or me or our husbands'—and they pass by. But the foreigners —they seem to think, 'Why, money or no money, I wouldn't be that way for a million,' and when one edges over they all dig down. (Thank you kindly, lady.) There, see! She's the wife, I'd say, of a Lithusian (Lithuanian). . . . And if they ain't nothing to give they'll say 'Good mornin'' or 'How's poor John?' or somethin', and that makes me feel good and that I ain't the dirt under their feet. Say, if I'd 'a' kept a diary I c'ud write a book I'll bet I could sell for a dollar and a half if I could sell it for a cent."

On the way down a painter told of having given up the very unsteady line of contract work, "with help so expensive and all," for a steady job with the railroad at about five dollars a day. He seemed to think very highly of the personal advantage of an occasional pass down to Washington or other such place, even though he had to forego his earnings for the time.

On the whole, the iron country seems to present a very definite problem of Americanization, which is getting pretty definite attention of the right sort. It looks, too, as though the least trouble is to be expected by those employers who most emphasize decent wages, with the rate never cut, steady, year-round work and square human treatment by the foreman on the job.

Though I've taken no job, I rather think I have a better

idea of the Range's thought about worker and "super" than if I had settled down to a dinner-pail in one place. "Leastways" it appears to be a good way of getting both groups to talking, this asking for a job and looking as though you needed it.

Northwesterly,
July 29.

Yesterday afternoon two of us waited for nearly an hour to see the employment manager of a big plant. A cigarette got the other waiter to talking. He was a young and well-tanned Norwegian, muscular but spare, with good teeth and a clean-moulded face that did not go well with his rough clothes.

"You see, I work here before—it's one of best companies to work for. I hope get my old yob back."

"My first boss here—he made me trouble. You see I know nothing about steel-yard when I take yob. The first night my boss see me know nothing and he say nothing. But the second night, because I do not understand, he call me name. I tell him, 'You first man to call me that, and you'll be last,' and I pick up bar iron and he run and I run. But he get away—and stay away long time. When he come back he laugh and say: 'You all right, Buddy, and I won't call you that no more.'

"And then one night he come to me and say, 'I drunk to-night.' I say, 'I can't help it,' and pretty soon he go off and sleep. I had to tell the mixer-boss where he was, so they two get mad and in the morning outside the gate they two fighted and he got two black eyes—besides gettin' fired.

"I remember one boss in powder-mill in Wisconsin. He fired us all out from eating in warm room so he could eat there himself alone. All right—till winter come and we all eat out in the rain and cold. And then one day the boys all take out their knives—they make me come along—and

they tell him: 'We kill you quick if we cannot eat in here.' He how was scared! He said 'all right' quick.

"But one boss I had—he was fine. Fine, good man he was. We all like him and on account we like him, you know, we all work for him harder—we work for him like devil. My, he was good, fine man!

"You know for another boss here, I sleep t'ree mont's; every night I go off and sleep. The boss he tell me to. He think more work come soon and he want me 'stick around but keep outa sight'!"

Finally the employment manager came in carrying his rough-looking red head far back of his feet in some way, but smiling.

"Nothin' to-day, boys, come around to-morrow at eight o'clock," he said. "The merchant mill's full"—to the Norwegian, who cursed the company roundly as we went out to the car. But there some of his old pals seemed to give assurance of getting him in, and he was happier when he waved me good-by.

As usual, I tried to get a line on the probabilities of getting work if we came at eight, but as usual could not.

The employment man was, however, decent enough to express regret this morning when he finally showed up after eight-thirty.

"I come up here from Bayonne because my brother he write from S———," said a Slavish man who waited with me. "I live here in company house long time. Rent very cheap—your fuel from company cheap, too. . . . Classes? Well, I leave Poland seven years old—fourth grade only. Study? Yes, like to, but how can—with twelve hours work and little garden besides?"

"Foreman? Some good, some bad. I do best for one who is gentleman and treats like gentleman. How men work for him, that depends on his character."

I take off my hat for his quiet thoughtfulness—also for

his not feeling unfriendly to the company though very sorry that within two months after being laid off last spring he had been asked to vacate his company house, and had hard work to find either a job or a house in a near-by city.

"The men on the long turns on the open-hearth, etc., call it a dog's life, but plan to stand it for a while and then beat it with the stake they can save," a substantial-looking worker put it. "Lately a first helper let a heat go through the bottom. He was fired. The one on the other turn came and saw and ran away—quit. Both are old before their time—tired all the time. I'd bet money that overwork caused the disaster—the 'Aw-to-h——-with-it' spirit. The minister here complained of the long hours and seven-day week to the 'super,' and his chairman of trustees was told to tell him to mind his own business. The solitary Protestant church has a hard time because nobody owns either his home or his job, and so hates to put very much money to help build a church he may never have a chance to enjoy. Just lately one of the deacons, long a leading resident, got his quit notice; he has no idea for what reason. The plant super once broke a nasty strike at another plant. He is pretty much boss of the town—tells the school head what he'll stand for in education and what he won't. The man he put in as secretary of the Men's Club is every so often found drunk on the job. On the 'floor' there's one gang-boss who is much respected. The men say: 'When he calls us down we know we deserve it. He tells what he wants done, ordinarily, and that's enough—we do it.'"

The town is certainly beautifully laid out and maintained. It would look, too, as if the H. C. L. were well tamed by a company apparently anxious to make the place as attractive as it can be made with the long work-day and without personal home ownership.

Northwesterly, July 30.

At the local employment office they referred me to a shipyard whose ad for "50 reamers, 50 bolters, 10 blacksmiths, helpers. Steady work" I had seen. Back of other counters in the government agency are representatives of various lumber-camps, iron-mines, saw-mills, etc., out in the country. They certainly paint a great picture: "New camp, good chuck, steady job, fine treatment—$4.85 a day," etc.

On the same street a number of the private hiring agents stand at their doors and buttonhole the passing job-seekers.

One of them caught a tartar. As I came by a drunken Slav came reeling out showing his bleeding knuckles.

"The devil he get me in. He tell me I no know the place he tell about, and call me Bohunk. He nothing but a —— Finn heemself, and I hit heem—hard."

Later this same agent, with the red mark still showing across his forehead, drew me into his dark lair and almost pushed his blanks and tickets into my pockets while selling out his own client:

"Thees a fine job—laying track near ——, Mich. Good camp, good chuck, an' everything, $4.20 a day. Take train at t'ree o'clock to-day—I need joost one more. Free ticket for ten dollars wort' of travel. Good pay. Eef you don't like, you work one, two day and go on, and you that mooch nearer Ohio."

And he would get another fee for supplying another worker!

Past these doors, looking at this notice or that, flock the human wreckage of the lumber-camps and the railway gangs.

One of the agents who had been in the government's employment service—and thought he knew several reasons for its recent demise—knew most of them.

"That chap there in the blue mackinaw, he's been around here for fifteen years. Maybe he'll have fifteen jobs during the summer—out and in, in and out, all the time. He wants booze and he wants a change. As long as he can get free transportation, what's the odds? Of course not many are giving that now except the railroads.

"But it ain't what it used to be. Why, I've seen men come in here with a big wad of, say, $2,000, and blow it all in—just throw it around. Many men just made a living by bumming off them—they'd just as soon give you a "V" as a nickel—if they had it. One fellow stole his pal's roll of $150. He hid it while the police searched him, and then went and spent it on his pal, the owner, and himself. He told me his pal wasn't spendin' it fast enough!"

"In the old days we used to throw 'em onto the trains and then throw 'em off on the snow. When they sobered up and got a stake again, back they'd be with us again."

"Well, the drunker ye be," said one philosopher I hobnobbed with, "the less ye'll be a-mindin' of the flies and the bugs in the camp; and by the time ye're sober ye're used to it, see? Or if ye ain't ye can quit and come back here and go som'ers else. . . . But take my advice, stick by yer boats and leave lumber-camps alone. I'm tellin' ye 'tis a dog's life."

Some of his pals wandered up and the discussion went on to the comparative merits of such substitutes as hair-tonic, wood-alcohol, etc.

The boss, who is often in cahoots with these private employment agencies and shares their fees for hirings, and then fires to permit others to be hired, is partly responsible for breaking down the morale of these former workers. These are the ones, too, who Professor Carlton Parker believed were the result of their homeless, voteless, and womenless life—often trying to find in the I. W. W.'s beliefs the

opportunity to express evilly the instincts their abnormal life forbade them to express wholesomely.

It was one of these unshaven, low-voiced chaps that I ran into one night in Cleveland some years ago. He was the secretary of an international hoboes union. I insulted him by letting him see that to me a hobo, a tramp, and a bum were all the same. He was excited as he fired back at me:

"Say, you don't suppose I'd be a tramp, do you? But do you know that this country couldn't exist without us 'boes! The Northwest's gotta have us guys work at lumber in the winter and then Oklahoma's gotta have us work in wheat in summer, and we gotta make quick connections, too, or the crop spoils. So we gotta take the train and we don't believe in spendin' money on fares. But a tramp!—Huh! He just *walks* from job to job because he don't care whether he ever gets there or not—and nobody else does, neither. A bum—well, he's no good whatever. He just bums a drink or a sandwich off people from day to day, 'thout doin' nothin' worth while for it. A tramp is miles above a bum."

So I'll wager that more of my new friends of this afternoon are still hanging on somehow to their self-respect than anybody in earth or heaven would ever suspect. Two boys to-day said they left their last camp because they had to walk four miles to get a postage-stamp. They seemed to think it a perfectly good reason, too. They were certainly young enough to have many sweethearts.

In spite of the tragedy the wreckage of the afternoon pushes in on an observer's soul; I'm just waiting for the chap who tries to tell me that human nature is fundamentally a sad mess and can never be relied on to get us anywhere, even under the best of circumstances! For I am surer than ever that they are right who claim that a "man may be down but never out." And I'll wager, too,

that this inborn and never-dying desire to get as far as possible from the zero of personal uselessness and insignificance is deeper down in us than even Professor Parker's instincts of workmanship, possession or acquisition, parenthood, curiosity, and all the ten or a dozen other she names. These seem to me merely the most common and best-recognized—the most tangible and acknowledged—ways in which a man can show himself a do-er and a be-er, and therefore entitled to the respect of himself and other do-ers and be-ers. And from listening to a lot of these men in the last few months I'm more certain than ever that a considerable part of their vices, especially their drinking, is because at those times they hear such assurances of their undiminished, individual manliness and value as they would so gladly, gladly hear when sober and decent and on the job, but—sad, sad, to relate—cannot.

I wonder if the hearing of it is so indispensable to being a man and keeping going that it is better for a man to hear it then than not at all. I wonder.

Northwesterly,
July 31.

In luck again! On the job! To-morrow at eight it's ship-building again. And instead of being a reamer's helper, I am to be the reamer himself—at fifty-eight cents per for an eight-hour day.

In the employment office a young chap of twenty-three spoke enthusiastically of his doings and responsibilities, especially his earnings, on twenty submarines under a ship-fitting contractor at ——. Since then:

"When I left there last fall I had over $400. Now—well, I've seen the country all right, but I'm sure busted. Down South I had a good job, too—good money and overtime almost every night till ten o'clock. I'd 'a' done that regular but they only put on one street-car and a few trucks, and by the time you got into town and to bed you was tired,

and it was midnight. To get up again at six to be out to the plant by eight was too hard. So I blew, and I been about every place y' ever heard of since."

Later this evening he was at those private employment agencies looking at the mining jobs, because "They didn't have my kind of work for me there at the yard." I sure hope he won't become one of those homeless wrecks.

The doctor in a clean-looking hospital wrote down all the "noes" of my family health history much faster than I could say them myself! In short order he put on my card the usual "Class A," which in turn got me my "All right. Be at the gate at seven-fifty to-morrow"—from the kindly, likable, and jolly employment clerk. (I wish there were more like him.)

It seems like old times to be setting the alarm-clock again—though eight o'clock seems a luxurious hour for the start on the job.

Northwesterly,
August 1.

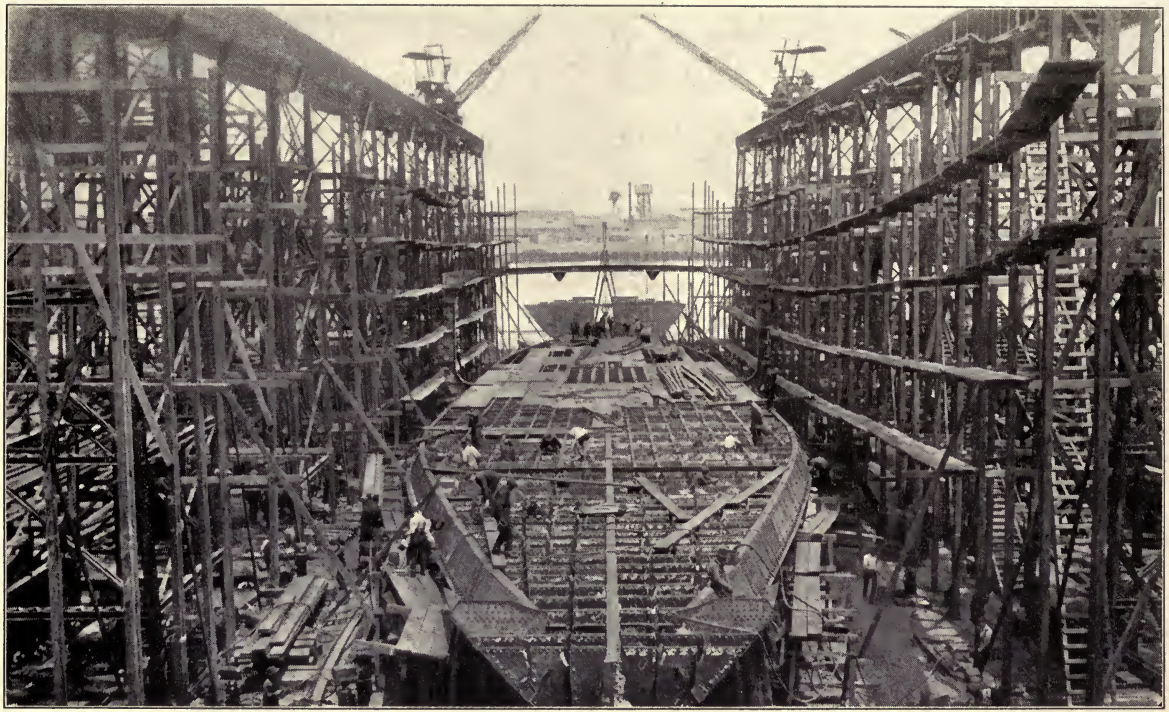
Few managers seem to realize how a worker figures—and begrudges—the minutes or hours he uses to go and come. Besides frequently causing the "passing up" of the distant job, it looks as though all those minutes—like all the drops of sweat—figure sooner or later in the worker's bill against his employer, and so in the cost of production, and, finally, of living, for everybody to pay.

When, after a fifteen-minutes' ride down-town, I got on the shipyards' car, I found it crowded, with many sitting on the floor. Quite a number were sleeping. It was another forty-five minutes before we got off for a few minutes' walk to the gate. Strangely enough, the train was no faster when I took it to come in this evening, "because the conductor can't take up the tickets any faster," my seat-mate said. So all together I put in eight hours at work and two more getting on the job and off of it.

At the plant it took a full hour and a half or more to answer to my alias, join the reamers at the proper gate-house, get badges and tool-checks, follow the leader into the yard, find the reamer-foreman in one of the hulls or shells, get the proper machine and air-hose, etc., etc. A stocky, black-browed, and bristly Italian, with a piggy expression written all over him in spite of his brown trousers and shirt and lavender suspenders, was my buddy. He said he had been making fifty a week in an eastern yard, but had to leave to avoid trouble. He bluffed better than I but did not know very much more about a reamer. We went very hard at reaming out the holes for the rivets in some pretty nasty places on the keel, that was barely laid, got almost no attention from the foreman, and broke several drills. When the noon whistle blew I was greatly surprised. He whispered: "We no work so —— hard this afternoon."

But after we had moved up with a long, slow line to a hearty and well-cooked dinner for thirty-five cents in the company restaurant, and had a cigarette, we went at it harder than ever. It was actually an Alphonse and Gaston affair. He would take the machine out of my hands ahead of his turn except that I insisted that it was my series of holes to ream. And all this time our foreman was seldom if ever in sight.

The flat reaming-machines are very hard to hold even when quiet, but they buck like a bronco when the air is turned on. Some attention could surely produce a design enormously easier to handle. The drill kept coming out and held us up badly—we would have raised Cain about it if we had been working piece-work. I notice again that fatigue grows fastest when you work hard and accomplish little. So that the foreman could save us some fatigue and the company much money by making sure that we get good tools. My tuition fees for learning how to handle the beast are in the shape of several welts across the arm where



LAYING THE KEEL

Each sheet comes onto the ways marked for a particular position into which it is swung by a crane. It is then ready for the attention of the ship-fitters, bolters-up, reamers, rivet-drivers, etc.

the machine's long handle caught it—once almost to the point of breaking the bone. But there is a feeling of pleasure in controlling such unmistakable power and making it do your will—except, as I say, when imperfect tools lessen the effectiveness of your effort. Bad tools that get no attention cause a lessening of the worker's respect for the management, which in turn gives a big push downward to the whole morale.

Well, I've done a good day's work and enjoyed it. I have no grouch on any boss because all of them I could see had a good look in their eye—with, possibly, one exception.

A machinist very kindly gave me the advantage of his commutation ticket on the train in, and mentioned his pleasure in the company. Of work in steel he thought little:

"No good. Too long hours. It takes a lotta guts to ask human bein's to work twelve and fourteen hours reg'lar."

He gets eighty cents an hour for eight hours and thinks highly of it.

As I think now how soon I must go to bed to rest my arms and back in time to get up at six, spend the hour on the way and have enough pep to stand my turn in taming that bucking reamer, it looks as though an eight-hour-inside-the-gates day is none too short.

Northwesterly,
August 2.

There's a lot of satisfaction in a good tired feeling honestly and constructively earned—and it's mine to-night.

That old reaming-machine has been on its noisy, jumpy, put-putty go almost every minute of the eight hours—with the Italian Luigi and me Alphonse-and-Gaston-ing to make sure we didn't loaf on each other, and he did his full share, even though one of the foremen whispered me to "Watch out for him—he's layin' down on you."

The work was about as yesterday, except that we didn't break so many drills and kept 'em in the machine better,

and in general felt the satisfaction of seeing our efforts count. Perhaps, too, we were helped by the demonstration of the usefulness of our work given us by the launching of one of the big hulls. It was inspiring to stand with the crowd of workers and their wives, children, and sweethearts and watch and listen to the team-work as the gang of maulers alternately attacked the supports on the water side or rested as though under an orchestra conductor—till finally the boat slid off into the water and the big wave wet all the careless bystanders. (They tell of a riveter who wondered if the minister would be careful with the bottle when he christened his baby! It is also said that the champagne's preciousness is what fits it to serve on such an occasion as this christening which continues the form and the spirit of the ancient blood-sacrifice.) Who officiated at the bottle-breaking and why the cranes and engines didn't make more fuss, I don't know, but I'm sure more noise would have helped make it more impressive. (A deaf writer claims that our feelings are more easily stirred through our ears than our eyes. Of course everybody knows that every parade without a band is a frost.)

The first day on the job you keep everlastingly on your toes in a way which tires the spirit; you wonder what's going to happen to you, how the boss is going to handle you, what kind of a company you've broken into, etc. You remember what happens then—good or bad—longer than the happenings of any other day, except, perhaps, the day you get promoted. The second day you *enjoy* more—if you were handled right the first day—partly because you aren't on your spirit's toes so much, and partly because you feel acquainted with your buddies. To-day when Luigi was taking his turn I cultivated several interesting chaps.

"I guess you're new at laborin', ain'tcha?" I said to one bright-eyed man with the face of a minister, who didn't know what rate he was getting with his welding-torch.

"Well," he said, "my brother's got me in here, and he's taking care of such things. He knows better than I, too, why I joined the union last night. . . . But anyway, it's better than farming—at least when you have as bad luck as I did."

A near-by Swedish-American seemed happy to be earning sometimes as high as fifty-five dollars a week at bolting-up, while keeping his living expenses for his family of three down to fifteen dollars—rent included. He wants now to buy a house, having sold his recently. He, too, had not succeeded at farming. His memories of several years in lumber-camps seem mostly of hunger.

A calker of the huskiest and sturdiest variety boasted to some friends this noon:

"I've earned as high as $27 here, and my average for a year has been $12 a day—piece rate, of course. And in the year I added $3,000 to what I had. . . . Naw, I ain't goin' to 'buy no store, mebbe?' I'm goin' to work a few more years and then quit. No more work for mine then."

"This place is no good!" A rivet-heater up on the crowded deck of the newly launched hull started in on me though I'd never seen him before. "Too all-fired many crews. You'll do 300 by noon and then not get 75 after, because another crew's comin' your way. An' every second man you meet is a foreman—he has to boss and he has to 'get his.' No wonder they say fifty men leave every day. One week's enough for me. Why, they ain't hardly anybody here now that was here a year ago, when I left. I'll hold out till Saturday, and then it's back to —— for mine."

Everybody else seems to be happy and to believe in the company. On our keel especially everybody seems to smile. Even though the noise permitted no exchange of ideas—unless you wanted to yell hard—sentiments went from one to the other; and these were valuable for the company, too. One gray-haired ship-fitter shouted something

at me; I couldn't catch it, but I noticed I smiled for an hour because I did catch the good-will and good humor of his mood.

When I took back my hose and turned in my badge and tool-checks to quit, I was asked no questions. My address was taken very politely and the forwarding of my pay promised. (Haven't yet got that money from the railway roundhouse because it was refused my messenger, and I've not been able to follow directions to call for it.)

On the car back to town my seat-mate was full of his day's ending:

"My God! My buddy's just been killed—in the last hour. The rivet-tosser come runnin' up yellin' 'He's dead in there! He's dead!' . . . And there he was just inside the deck-house o' that boat launched to-day—with his hands on his chest clutchin' the little electric-light wire that had electrocuted him. . . . No, the pulmotor couldn't help him, the doctor said."

The lad had been a stranger till assigned to him that afternoon, so he soon got to talking of other things:

"Yes, he's a good foreman and I'll say he's been square to me—suggestin' one boost after another till now I'm drivin' 'em in (riveting) for my eighty cents an hour or, if I get piece-work, my little fifteen dollars per. . . . Oh, I'll say that hammer makes me deaf as a bat every once in a while. And when I'm workin' inside and somebody up above on deck hits his drift-pin or the sheet a wallop—Say! Ain't it awful!"

Macheenia,
August 20.

After twenty-four hours here the prospect looks bad for any work in steel.

Yesterday morning the papers bore large notices that the Blank Company wanted "Drill-Press hands, etc.," and

could offer as inducements "Good wages, ideal factory, no labor trouble."

Inquiry of a group of men near the gates indicated, however, that the company had assumed too much in promising the last-named advantage. The tool-room men had struck and were reporting good progress in calling out other groups, one by one. "Why, it's a cinch; they can't run without us, and when the boys in the assembly department come out to-night, the big fellows will see that they're up against it." The pickets are taking their work seriously and seem to have good organization. The chief station is in front of a saloon where many lounge to absorb the latest news and, one or two of them, more beer than is good for them.

No one seems to have any definite idea of the cause of the trouble. "Ask the committee; they're to make the demands," the rank and file make alibi. But the committee members appear to know little more about it than their companions. "Our wages should be higher, because living is higher," but how much higher does not seem to have been given much thought by any of them. Working conditions and the foremen the group reports as satisfactory. Altogether, it appears only a matter of the wounded feelings of the leaders.

"You see, we was elected by all the men in the tool-room, union and non-union, to represent 'em to the superintendent. We was given power to straighten out all the tangles. Well, we been wranglin' and wranglin' for two weeks, and now the management refuses to recognize us now or for the future. So we called the boys out."

The boys have evidently stood by and obeyed the call loyally. It is hard not to believe that some company official has either not suspected the seriousness of the attitude of his chief workers or else has lost his temper in a

way that has turned them all hard against him. At any rate, it is certainly hard for an outsider to see any more valid reason for the difficulty than mishandling or bungling somewhere.

It's plain, though, that, as in the case of most strikes, the original factors of the matter are being fast forgotten in the present acute stage. As the time dragged on through an afternoon which most of them would have found fairly short inside the plant, the tone and manner in which the company was mentioned grew less and less respectful and decent—more and more bitter. Motor-men and conductors dropped off from the cars and joined their remarks to the others regarding the unspeakable selfishness and unlimited greed of all capitalists and employers as causing all the evils of these costly times. The unsoundness of the reasoning, and the wide inaccuracy of the facts passed out in explanation of matters economic and industrial, made a sad commentary on our educational and publicity arrangements. It should be added, however, that outside the street-car men, most of the talking was done by one who, in recounting his different attempts to earn a living, was very frank to say that this and that plan had gone awry because "Well, I guess I like my beer too much." Not that he was anything but jaunty about it. "Hell, it's as easy as pie to earn a living—if not there in the plant, then in some other way where those hogs can't boss us."

"I hain't no great kick at anything—I've been there ten years and I'm not a member of the union," whispered one of the most thoughtful. "They do say that some of the boys in other shops are getting more than we are—and I know I don't want to hog anything off of anybody. But the boys on the committee are a good bunch, and I'm for givin' them a chance to show what they can do."

The chances are that in a few days even he will be keeping up with the crowd by joining in with the unthinking

and bitter mud-slinging of the rest—especially when the gallant optimism of the leaders comes to meet the stern test of the silence of the management. Without the slightest doubt, too, such a man as he will never be worth to the company as much as he was before. Whatever the outcome of the effort, his attitude toward his employers will never again be as friendly as it has been during his ten years to date. Sometimes I imagine—as when troubles are of long standing and as much in the way as a sore thumb—a good scrap may clear the air, but this one seems needless.

Doubtless it is hard for the management to imagine properly in advance the blitheness with which such a group expects to bring the company to its knees.

"No, we ain't heard nothin' from 'em yet," one of the leaders assured a questioning follower who had evidently found his uneventful picketing a long, long turn. "But to-morrow—that's Friday—I expect a lot more o' the boys out from the other departments, and I give 'em till Saturday. Yessir, before Saturday noon the big fellows'll be sendin' for us—that's at the latest, y' understand."

That was yesterday. This morning the crowd at the gates—or, rather, across the street from them—was larger, but from inside came the sound of a busy factory. I got permission from them to go into the employment office to ask about work in a department not yet on strike, promising "the boys" to come out on strike with them if the rest decided to come. The employment clerk said: "We don't know ourselves what it's all about. Guess they'll be back before long. If you'll turn up Monday we'll have something for you."

When I reported to the group, it appeared too much like trying to crab—or "scab"—their game, so I guess I won't try it. I'm sorry. It looked like a good shop, though the noise in the office is fearful.

The State employment bureau seems not to have the

co-operation of some of the larger steel companies, so I had to ask the corner policeman to help start off for their gates.

"We're still hand-loadin' our furnace and it's all we can do to get the foreigners to stay on it—even the drunken ones —and I don't blame 'em at that. I'll say it's mighty hard, dirty work. Come around when we get our new machinery in," was the surprising way in which the superintendent of a blast-furnace turned me down.

The last man of the day's searchings I have just come from—and my temperature is still near the boiling-point.

It was a pleasure to observe that the big steel-plant looked clean, with grass in evidence, safety appeals in all places, dinkies busy, and stacks smoking enough to indicate that business was keeping as many, say, as 2,000 men busy.

The face of the man with his feet on the desk in the gate-shanty had all the marks of the plant policeman, though he wore no uniform. It was small but florid and stern, pierced by two small, steel-blue eyes, and topped by a heavy shock of steel-gray hair. I asked about the "chances for a man's gettin' on here to-day, huh?"

"Nothin' doin'," he vouchsafed without looking up from his paper—in a steel-gray voice if ever I heard one.

"Well, what about Monday? Any chance, sir?"

"Can't say"—sound of steel-gray filings and business of reading the paper.

"Well, is the plant runnin' pretty full?" This in the effort to see if he was just absorbed in the news item and a human being again when he finished.

"Guess so"—still in the midst of it, and still less human than a nice, warm, orange-red, steel ingot.

There was nothing to do but turn away—I was almost afraid of being arrested, or at least "bawled out," if I stood and looked at him while trying to think what to say next, in an effort to convey the impression that a job was of some interest to me. Then from a safe distance I called back:

"Got an employment department here?"

"'S all there is," he spat out of the corner of his mouth like an overchewed tobacco quid.

How can such a man—if he is a man and not one of the charging machines brought down from the "floor" and reversed into a discharging machine—how can such a man fail to realize the enormous seriousness of a job to the man who asks for it? How can any company which believes in "safety first" for its men be so careless of the safety of itself and the industrial régime? For such a creature makes a real man want to enroll with the upsetters of the system which puts him there with his feet on the table.

Perhaps my radiator is a little too hot to favor proper working at this moment of my cerebral cylinders, but I will hazard again that this type of plant guard, together with the ordinary type of secret-service man too often employed by many companies, is easily accountable for a reduction by at least fifteen per cent in the good-will and friendly relations which might normally be expected from the various arrangements for better relations made common in the various plants during the past few years.

I don't think I like this town, so I guess I'll move into what the steel men call the Calumet District.

P. S.—On the train a brakie seemed to think that only by a strike could people be made to realize how "this country can't get along without us railroad guys. Why, where in h—— 'ud they be, huh?" Which makes an ordinary patron wonder whether some of these strikes aren't more to obtain from a thoughtless and unappreciative public a larger personal or group recognition and appreciation of services rendered than to get more wages, or even more union authority and prestige.

CHAPTER X

AMONG THE INGOTS AND BILLETS AGAIN

Calumetta,
August 25.

From the Northwestern ranges it is, of course, easy to follow the great ore barges to the points where coal and ore find it convenient to meet. Within the last few years the district at the lower end of Lake Michigan has developed with amazing speed into a steel centre of huge proportions. It offered new and interesting territory for study.

Was all ready for the day's work this morning shortly after five. But after walking over a plant which should be famous for its magnificent distances, I was told to report at five-thirty for my old friend the twelve-hour shift. A real working man probably wouldn't bother to take more than an hour or so of sleep in advance preparation for anything, so I'll follow suit and hope that my new straw-boss will be as anxious to find an hour or two of slumber for himself on the job to-night as my previous bosses on the long shifts have been.

At the employment office Saturday they asked a question or two, gave me a card marked "Labor or better," and instructions to "Be around Monday morning between six and seven." Evidently they are unwilling to sign a man up till he is ready to go right onto the job. This morning the basement room was filled and overflowing with a few of us white and many black Americans, many Mexicans in overalls and sombreros, and others who had shown their slips to the policeman—yes, he was about as officious as usual—and been given their places in the procession up to the window. It moved very slowly and at its end brought many disappointments.

"How old are you?" the employing clerk would shout. "How old? . . . Well, you'll have to get a birth-certificate before you can get a job here."

Or,

"Sign here. Can't write? Well, how do you spell it? Slow, now! P-r-z-l-m. . . . That right? All right, go with that man to the north gate."

In between our semi-occasional moves the policeman would take the holders of certain slips—evidently former employees—up to the window ahead of the line, to the accompaniment of many subdued growls.

Finally my companion and I got to the window; he to be told, "No, that church birth-certificate won't do—get a real one from the court"; and I to be directed to the —— gate with my pass.

When my department head was finally found after long trudgings and many inquiries, he was non-committal as to the kind of work, but very definite in his orders that I be on hand a good half-hour before the whistle starts the night-shift.

Walking past a group of loaders, with my package of overalls under my arm, one of them called out, "No got job?" and grunted his approval when I answered: "To-night."

And to-night it is. I'll be happy to be part of the gorgeous spectacle of flame and shadow, white clouds and black roofs and stacks, which the roaring Bessemer converters blow upon the sky to be enjoyed in the park where I loafed last night. And while my eyes enjoyed the picture for its dazzling wealth of blaze and smoke and steam, a couple of bench companions interpreted it in the terms that interested them—those of flesh and blood:

"Yes," said an American of apparently good education, "it's us clerks who are not getting what we should out of all that there. Why, just a few days ago one of the boys

said to the office manager: 'Well, I'm quitting the stool for good; I've figured it out that instead of my $150 here I'll make $200 outside there on the coke-ovens.' And he's right at that."

"Me been with ——" (a near-by company) "eight years—one same job since come dees country. Get 43½ cents hour, and now have eight-hour sheeft—with ten hours pay. Pay $40 mont' board and room: alla time stew for eat—alla time stew—no good. . . . Sure we all join union—must get more money or go back to ten—twelve hours."

He seemed a fine type of the Polish worker—strong, well-shaven, intelligent-looking. His family of five is still in Poland—"on a farm—good buildings—everything—yes, all right now. During war me get good money but no can send not'ing. Just now send me 'em $2,000."

Yes, I'll be glad to be part of the picture—but gladder to get closer to the other men who have been part of it for years. A lot of them, probably, have never thought of it as a picture at all but, at that, I guess their view of it as bread and butter for themselves and their wives and youngsters here or "back in old countree" comes closer to the heart of the matter than the "Ah's" and "Oh's" of us sight-seers there on the park bench.

Here goes for a short snooze and then into the greasy brogans, wool socks, and all the plant fixin's.

Calumetta,
August 26.

Like the first twenty years at golf, it's the first half of the twelve-hour shift that's the hardest. It looked last night as though midnight had forgot to come. When I guessed it was eleven, my fellow "hooker" laughed and showed me it was nine! After supper in the plant restaurant when the whistle finally blew, I lost a good hour of sleep by searching for my boss and buddies: I found them at last in a dark shanty fast asleep—and joined them without

further delay! When, an hour later, we started to work again it seemed bearable to think of sticking at it till the end.

The work itself is not very bad—hooking the chains around the piles of billets so the crane-man can lift them off the iron trucks which bring them from the blooming mill, or else guide them into the pickling-vat, etc. When the billets—they weigh from a few hundred pounds up to several tons—are red hot it is warm business, and prospects are good for my getting a fine collection of burns unless I can learn that all steel is not cold that looks it. At all times the work is dangerous, especially while fastening the chains to the tongs which lift out the separate billets to be drilled for testing—all the steel at this "dock" is said to be special, for tools, etc. A finger in the wrong place or a glove caught suddenly seems to mean nothing to the ten-ton crane, as many of my friends appear unfortunately able to testify.

Our boss, Tom, seems a friendly sort, just lately promoted to his new responsibilities but evidently not afraid of them, seeing how regularly he goes to sleep in their presence. But he is jolly with us and does seem anxious to get through with all the stuff that has to be handled before daybreak. And the men—there are four of us under him—seem to like him. So the outlook is not bad. The crane-man under him seems to know the job better than he, but "is too temperamental for big responsibilities," according to a friendly clerk:

"Mike's been here on the billet-dock over ten years, and he'd be a boss if he'd let booze alone—and wouldn't be quite so fast and furious with his crane. Yes, he sure is a terrier with those tongs when he's not on the crane!"

Everybody has a good word, too, for the assistant head of our department, Louis. He got a young Pole to give me a share of his locker, and told me to go into the office to eat my dinner—and generally to take liberties not given,

as he puts it, "to any but white men," and to hope for an early raise from the gang. The Pole proceeded to loan me a dirty shirt so I could save my clean one. In general, everybody gave me a friendly go. So I'll do my best to get close to them and the job and the twelve-hour shift—and hope not to lose an hour's sleep again by not knowing the ropes.

Calumetta,
August 27.

The possibility of the great steel strike is on everybody's mind. Apparently every word about it in the newspapers is diligently read—for rehashing during the night with many comments.

"Aw, them guys think we've worked their old twelve and fourteen hours so long that we'll stand for anything," says the Polish crane-boy. "We'll show 'em pretty soon!"

"But I don't believe we go out," confides a young Polish "hooker" working along with me. "They ask for seventy-five cents hour—no company give dat, and not many workin' mans believes dey give it. I tink dey no go out—no difference if dey do vote ninety-eight per cent strike."

"Why shouldn't the company give us the eight-hour day without makin' anybody strike for it?" says the heater, happening by from the soaking-pits. "I'd be glad to let it cost me three or four dollars a day." (A door-boy working on the same hot floor with him, says the man works eleven hours days, and thirteen hours nights, every other week, and earns about $400 a month, wages and tonnage.)

"What we earn is all right but it's these fellows that *take it away from us!*—the grocers, the meat-man, and all," complains an old oiler. "Why, you never get no change from a dollar bill any more. Stone of the engineers 's a big man, and he's right—let's try to cut the cost o' livin' first."

"Well, count me in, uncle, for a six-day week like a civi-

lized man," says an engineer of thirty years' service. "This work fourteen hours nights every day in the long-shift week is plain hell, and we oughta stop it—and we woulda long ago, if the bosses hadn't seen some profit for themselves to keep us from it."

"Well, mebbe me see my girl every day when eight-hour comes," smiled another Polish hooker who had earlier confided how he maintained friendly relations with his Polish-American fiancée by spending nearly every other day with her, catching up his sleep on the odd days.

It looks to me as though three main factors are at work for such discontent. First, the war has made everybody want to live a more normal life than the long shifts permit. Secondly, the state of chronic fatigue caused by these long shifts enormously complicates the relations between the worker and all his superiors and all his world, in fact, inclines him to be fretful, distrustful, almost malicious. Anybody who doesn't believe it, should "try it on his own Victrola!" And third, the present constant public dinning of the H. C. L.—even though in the effort to reduce it—makes every one *feel* poor.

Let no one cast the first stone; it is enough to try the souls of the sanest men. In the days when I tried to interest the rich in philanthropic gifts it was always evident that every one is as rich as he *feels;* his actual bank-book figures have little to do with it. Russell Sage is reported to have told the street panhandler who asked him for a dime: "Why, man, I have a million dollars in the bank not earning a cent—come around some other day when I'm not so worried!" Even if the constantly ascending costs were to be brought low by the punishment of any profiteers, that makes it all the more certain that somebody's profits have grown abnormally while your wages have either stood still or shrunk, or at least grown only normally. In any case it all makes you *feel* poor. And when added to by chronic

fatigue, that makes you feel *sore,* ready to call for an accounting of all your troubles.

The psychologist James talked about men becoming great because instead of stopping when they're tired they keep pushing into the energetic freshness which, he claimed, lies just beyond these layers of weariness. He called these layers "fatigue dams." My experience of the last few months makes me think he is right in the case of the man who has a chance to "catch up" and start even again at occasional intervals or is kept up by the feeling of large achievement. But where the foreman takes for himself most of the feeling of achievement, and where it is the same round for weeks and months of "Yes, sir, eleven hours days and thirteen hours nights steady, with only two days off in two years—not exceptin' Sundays and holidays," as some of my buddies have boasted—then I'm sure it's a "*Fatigue Damn.*"

I've had more of these in their acute form in working hours under plant roofs than ever in my life before. They were nasty and they gummed up the works for the day's sane thinking about everything, especially about my employers—and lots of well-meaning employers are undoubtedly having their motives misunderstood by those daily temporary fatigue dams. (I remember, for instance, the white, pinched face of young Giovanni near the tired end of that first night in the open-hearth labor gang as he stood on the hot bricks of the down-take and told the boss he could "go to h——; I'm through"—and many others in the same mood.)

But the big trouble comes when these little acute emergency or temporary dams become chronic! They certainly do wall off tired men into different compartments from rested ones! Just now there seems at least a fair chance that dynamite may be put to work in the country before they are blown up and away.

These feelings are not lessened by the talk of other companies in the neighborhood in which the long shifts have been abolished, with, usually, nine, ten, or eleven hours' pay given for eight hours' work—and with also, I believe, a saving to the company, at least where leaders instead of drivers are put in as gang bosses and foremen.

But possibly I'm suffering myself at this moment from too long and too busy nights. We were kept very busy nearly all the shift. This morning I dragged the long way to the employment office to ask if the labor job they mentioned at the blast-furnace was still open; it sounded dirty but interesting. When the policeman planted himself in front of me and asked very curtly what I wanted, I found the night's work had made me very touchy. It seemed to me it was not his business to say, "Aw, you can't get no transfer," when the employment clerk in charge of such matters was only six feet away. It was only the sight of his billy that kept me from busting a dam or two while I walked around him.

In line with the clerk's direction, I walked a block or two to find the blast-furnace head. "He'll be here in a minute," his assistant said. After a half-hour another said: "He'll be here in an hour and a half."

I dragged myself home—very late and very weary—and to bed. Now, after a poor day's sleep, I must start early for the blast-furnace again—tired to begin with. I'll try to work through and over it and trust for a dam and not a damn in the morning.

So I'll say Good Night—and go to work!

Calumetta,
August 28.

Another night on the chain gang.

All the bosses at the blast-furnace were enjoying the shower-bath, with which each department office is equipped for general use, and I waited some time for my man. He

evidently has trouble getting labor for his extremely dirty and disagreeable work, and seemed about to take me on when I unfortunately mentioned my very short period on the "billet-dock."

"Aw," he said then, "you come round in a week. I sure hate these hurry-up transfers."

He is probably right. Of course I could quit the "hookers gang" and then take a chance at "hirin' on" in the blast-furnace at the employment office; but that's risky; I guess I'll do well to get better acquainted with my present billets and chains—and buddies.

"Let she blow!" snorted my young Pole as the starting whistle blew before we had got our work clothes out of our common locker. "Dat what she for! Let she blow."

Yes, we do take it easy getting under way. Mike, the strenuous crane man, reports for his day one of the best sleeps in weeks; Stephen none at all. Tom, the gang boss, got in only a few hours, but he has looked over the orders for the night and joyously announces that, "We'll be able to go over the line for fair all right"—the interpretation whereof is that we'll be able to "hit the hay" or "pound our ears" for at least an hour before morning without slighting any billets.

We did, but the steel we handled was red-hot and made it a fairly strenuous night. Of course, in between trainloads there was time for tobacco and a bit of gossip about the strike. In one such breathing spell I saw the crane man motion big Joe as he lowered the huge hoist-block with its enormous hook. I supposed that meant to take off or put on chains as usual, but was ordered back by the crane's staccato bell. All was plain when Joe took out a cigarette, placed it on the block so that the crane man could raise it and "rack it in" along his travelling bridge to where he could reach the precious smoke and enjoy himself.

The Poles seem silent to us but they certainly enjoy

conversation with each other—in loud voices which kill sleep for any one trying to go "over the line" on one of the locker-room benches. All an ordinary person can get is the constant interlarding of typical American profanity and obscenity which seems to be indulged in as a sort of badge or "first papers" of Americanism.

My sleepy admonitions to "Aw, hire a hall!" got no consideration whatever. "Poland and the League of Nations," said my buddy when I asked him what the talk was about. (Six months ago I would have sworn it was a riot or a row instead of a talk!)

Finding sleep impossible in the presence of the League I went over to my old friends, the open-hearth furnaces and the chaps at work beneath the "floor," and came back wondering whether some of these Americans who ask, "Why do these 'wops' come over here, anyway?" would be willing to do for any money the work these foreign-born workers do without a murmur at forty-three cents an hour.

Without at least a half-day's practice I could not have stayed, for any money, ten minutes in the checker-chamber from which a crowd of husky foreigners were taking out the checker-brick. A thermometer would without doubt have registered there, as it did at another plant mentioned some time ago, a heat at which the scientists will prove that life cannot be sustained! Yet there they are—a half-hour in and a half-hour out, theoretically, though I doubt if it works out as long as that practically—helping to quiet the demand for open-hearth steel.

If, as reported, over 100,000 foreign-born workers have left the country in the past three months, and if this pace continues, the answer must be the invention of machinery for these jobs. Certainly such machinery would require no greater ingenuity than much already under successful—and indispensable, also, and much to the point, cost-reducing—operation.

When it comes to sweat and muscle and brawn and heat and dirt and gas, and nearly every unpleasant thing that can be thought of in connection with back-breaking work, it certainly seems up to these chaps to do it—these and negroes. Not one of us need withhold our acknowledgment that the great structure of American industry—and that means American commerce, American prosperity, American life—is built finally on the husky biceps and the hairy, sweaty chests of these fellows—these fathers and husbands and brothers. And of many of them even their children and wives and sisters do not appear to sense their service any better than do the rest of us; some of them seem to me, with their endless hours and absence of layoffs, to be making of themselves in actuality, genuine living sacrifices for their families.

A labor agitator would agree with all this—and then proceed to draw two false deductions from it: first, that labor gives all the value there is—brains and capital nothing; second, that the higher-ups and the capitalists are wittingly and consciously to blame, are cruel exploiters of those beneath them.

Neither logic nor, in my opinion, experience is on the agitator's side. But the trouble is that logic isn't on the job with these men: it lies down before those fatigue dams and goes to bed after the first eight, nine, or ten hours of hard work, and the feelings which then take control of the mind of the tired worker find sweet music in his words.

Just now I can't complain personally of the hard toil. But even at that the twelve-hour day—or night—leaves almost no time for those ordinary relationships of father, brother, sweetheart, or friends which make life worth living. Add to the twelve the usual average of an hour and a half to go and come—an average of two hours would be fairer in the city—and you have left only three of the sixteen waking hours in which to dress and undress, eat three meals,

look at a paper, get acquainted with your youngsters, or retain your stand-in with your "lady-friend."

Of course logic can pointedly ask: "Why eight hours? —why not seven or five?" And managers and experts can discuss it for days. Of course it does vary according to the kind of work. They are right in saying that there are two sides to the question—in logic. But the workers don't come to their conclusions by logic—at the end of his first or his fiftieth week of the twelve-hour shift the manager would probably agree with his men that it just "*felt*" too long, and would then observe that most of their mutual friends were on eight hours, which would be enough to make it look better than nine or ten.

In some such informal way of feeling rather than thinking it looks as though pressure is likely to grow for making the eight or nine hour day for the labor gang (possibly longer where men live near the plant) economic—profitable for the company and the man. As a matter of fact, I'm growing more sure that the twelve-hour day is tremendously wasteful, and so a part of our little old companion, H. C. L.

It is probably true that the unskilled man who works with his bare hands cannot really produce enough to make a decent living in eight hours—also that the labor gang is already the most expensive part of the whole productive process. In which case, there are two good reasons for the invention of more machinery to handle those subhuman jobs—besides lessening the bugaboo of possible labor shortage at a later date.

The conversation of the workers every place makes it plain as day that every deprivation of normal life and its normal relationships, as well as every drop of sweat and ounce of muscle has to be paid for. Long hours, smoke, dirt, grease, heat, loads, "no spell," all these things, as well as "bad boss," go to make one job pay more than another if it is to find workers. Hour after hour of in-between talk

goes on about these details—and the charge that has to be made for them on the boss and the company. And the consumer pays the bill for it whether it is genuinely essential to the process or merely overlooked by an ignorant gang boss, an overworked and undermanned millwright department, or an overlogical and undersympathetic superintendent.

"Two time—tree time—four time I ask for electric heater in my crane," says Lorenzo. "Alla time—'All right, some day.' Never she come. Seex time I ask for lights so I see acid tank for put billets in: never no —— light she come. Dees h—— of job."

"Yes," says the brakie of the dinky engine which hauls the trucks piled with billets from the blooming-mill to us, or takes the hot ingots from the cinder pit and the open-hearth to the soaking pits. "Get $6.95, but all time run, run—never no rest—ten hours day and fourteen nights. No good."

"Had good job in M——," says Walter, a Polish fellow-hooker, "but cars no good dere—leave too far to walk in winter. . . . Too cold—and den I got no people dere. Here my cousins."

All sounds perfectly human, doesn't it?

Here, too, as everywhere before, I get the idea that all this would be different if there was more feeling that hard work would in the end bring the longed-for better job. But everywhere here, as usual, is the conviction that the only real way to get ahead is to marry the boss's daughter. To my surprise a young college-bred chap who has an important job as a semi-technical clerk voiced this conviction, and—worse—was able to support his point.

"The department super?—he's the cousin of the general super. His assistant?—married his sister"—and so on down the line for nearly everybody in sight, or out of it, in the whole place.

"Why, we've got men over us," said the engineer; "they're blamed good men, I'll say, too. But fellows they used to boss are now over 'em, and they in the same job as seventeen years ago; they hadn't no pull, you see. An' I gotta friend—he's a 'sailor'—that's a general engine and machine fixer. He goes to war; he comes back, y' understand, to get his job. The boss's nephey's got it. 'Thout no experience a-tall, y' might say. 'Course he quit, wouldn't you?"

But I've slept from seven-thirty till two-thirty—seven hours. It's four-thirty now—time to start for supper and work. I could stand it not to get into my dirty clothes—but here goes.

So long till what always looks and feels like day after to-morrow, but isn't.

Same Place,
August 29.

Of course the night shift gives little chance to see the social life of the district. The saloons seem generally deserted—at least in the afternoons. The Greek candy and soda places look busy, but not with working men. Beer is still available, also whiskey to those in the know, I'm told, though at very high prices. The movies seem sufficiently lurid—and prosperous.

In general, the houses and flats are not particularly bad—partly perhaps because many of the women of the district help out by such jobs as "putting the tights on the sausages" at a local packing-house. As usual, the homes nearest the plant are the worst, filled apparently, every room of them and out onto the street, with the least successful of the foreign-born and negroes, their women, and, especially, their children. In between are numerous dirty eating-rooms and saloons with brand-new "Soft Drinks" signs. As the young man passes some of these latter, the panel at the back of the show-window opens stealthily and discloses the beckoning finger of the painted barmaid.

The English language—mostly broken—is fairly common on the street. In the early morning and evening hours the cars are crowded with hard-working men going to or coming from work with their dinner-pails. At our plant comparatively few seem to patronize the very good and inexpensive company restaurant. In their hands are a surprisingly large number of newspapers of all languages, including mostly the lurid and well-known American sheet which gives the least news and the most bitter and unfair criticism of every group except the workers. From the photographers' exhibits it is plain that marrying and giving in marriage is a frequent and highly festive occasion, with confirmation competing with it for first place among life's high spots.

The search for a room discovered some crowded, dark, grimy apartments, with dingy bathrooms of antiquated and neglected plumbing and linoleum. "We mostly gets four dollars for it, sir." My choice at three has been clean, comfortable, and well-ventilated—cared for by a matronly grandmother of good German type, who was proud of having all clerks, and needed strong urging to take in such a rough-looking steel worker as she evidently thought me.

To-day, particularly, the numerousness of the district's cripples has got on my nerves. While we were getting our work duds on last night I noticed big Lorenzo using his knife to cut off a finger from a new pair of the white canvas gloves which are almost as necessary as clothes. When I protested, he answered "No good—no use!" and held up his hand to show that finger missing. During the night as we fixed the chains around the heavy hot truck loads, or put the tongs on the big billets, watchful to extricate our thumbs and fingers, my buddy carried on the tale of all the accidents he had witnessed:

"Dese two fingers here dat cost him. See? Anodder fellow, da whole billet it break loose and fall on him—nine mont' in hospital 'fore he get well. . . . Me? Me no get hurt—me know how—work t'irteen years and never no

accident. Green man—green man *lak you*—he get hurt—unless watch mighty sharp!"

In the restaurant, after Tom, the boss, had told how he broke his leg—a one-footed boy served himself and handled his crutch dexterously. On the way home I passed the one-armed crossing watchman, bought a paper of the half-handed newsman, and then joined a crowd in the street—to gaze on a mass of thick red blood left on the pavement just after the home-hurrying victim of the motor-cycle collision had been put in the ambulance and hurried off to the company hospital.

On the car I was not too tired to return the smile of an early-rising baby on its father's shoulder—smiled till I glanced at its chubby hand and discovered to my horror that all the fingers had been cut off!

Here are my thanks to be through with this job and still intact, though I expect to locate in one or two more mills before I go back to assume the white (collared) man's burden. I'm only sorry that I can't stop for a go at the blast-furnace or the Bessemer. But I will say that it doesn't take many twelve-hour nights of uninteresting hand labor to seem like a mighty long time.

It would seem longer were it not for the flaming panoramas and the monster noises always on hand. To be close to all the mammoth power they spell gives somehow a subtle pleasure—as though it were somehow in process of becoming part of your own personal equipment. As you stand on the rim of the pickling-tank waiting to guide the crane-load of billets into the acid for taking off the scale, you suddenly feel warmth at your back, and turn to marvel at the wondrous orange-colored ingots following the dinky through the yard as silently as if they were the iridescent oil-jars of Ali Baba. Then over in the open-hearth the building's outlines are in an instant thrown out black against the sky by the dazzling silver whiteness of the tapping—as if the devil

himself had suddenly switched on the lights of Hell's General High Headquarters. A moment later the crane bell in the near-by building sounds its urgent warning, and the soaking-pit opens to throw out a lemon-yellow glow on the great room's black steel rafters. Then the crane's huge and sinister mutilated hand of finger and thumb reaches down into the fiery abyss under the guidance of the unseen man above and then relentlessly soars up and over with its dripping yellow ingot to the receiving tables of the blooming-mill. Too-ot! goes the whistle of the bar roller from his bridge and, looking like some dumb helpless beast, the ingot is rushed onto the roll tables, clankity-clank, up to and through the huge, sputtering rolls that shower hot fiery scale everywhere, only to be stopped suddenly with a colossal bang! After an instant's pause of silence the rolls are reversed, the yellow beast, now turning red, is pushed back through and, clankity-clank again, stopped, bang!—till it is become lean and thin and comparatively cold, ready to be cut and hustled again into other furnaces for later heating and further rolling into the finished beams for the new sky-scraper. Too-ot! goes the whistle again, and on the instant the soaking-pit crane-man has deposited his dripping burden and another Ingot Beast is on his way to the slaughter of the tirelessly grumbling and ceaselessly sputtering rolls: for these are tonnage-men, and every instant means money. Marvellous, too, are the deeds and doings of the crane-men who reach into the furnaces to clasp one of these elongated blooms, lift it off of the tables, and then by a sort of swing-your-partner movement, which is too complex to try to describe, contrive to place it in other furnaces, and then put the reheated steel back again onto the "tables" which carry it to the smaller rolls. These give it its final form and leave it to cool until it is put into the cars for shipment and use.

It's a shame that the movies can't make these wondrous

From a photograph by Lewis W. Hine

"WHERE COAL AND ORE MEET"

In the upright "stoves" or "bottles" the blast of air for melting the ore is heated with the help of coke, in the presence of limestone

sounds and don't make these wondrous sights the experience of every one who enjoys the modern life, the weight of which is borne by the fabricated contents of those gorgeous, orange-colored Ali Baba jars!

When we parted after the morning's wash-up I brought out my overalls under the pretense of necessary laundering —saying good-by calls out too many questions, and trying to get my money on the spot is too hard on time and disposition.

On the whole, it looks as though, like most of the others, the company is trying to better its relations with its men, but does not seem to realize how far they must go in the way of organization to bridge the gulf after they have taken the first step of genuinely wishing to be fair and square. Classes there are in various studies, but no worker I met knows of them. Of the character of the men at the top no one I saw had anything but the haziest ideas, though for the most part all agreed that they were, of course, here as elsewhere, "out for the dollar."

My last inquiry was of a young and handsome, black-pompadoured crane-man from another "dock." Born here, he had had two years public school in addition to a Polish parochial school which gave instruction mostly in English and partly in Polish.

"No, my father's not goin' back—all of us are here. But at that he's sorry he came over; he left a good business over there for some fool reason. He's raised twelve of us kids and he's husky as you'd want. He has drunk a beer-glass full of whiskey every night for thirty years—'course about half of it is the melted lard he puts in it. But he's like the rest of these foreign-born slaves around here—worked his head off and still only a 'chipper,' which, as you know, is all-fired hard work. Me, I'm just married. . . . What! Twelve kids to go round and kiss the foreman for jobs? No, not for me!"

One thing is certain, the second generation he represents will never be seen very often or very long in the heat of the checker-chambers. So if that work is to be done by humans and not by machines, it will require a constant stream of " them ignorant foreigners."

I'm off for other steel towns in this same district.

Calumetropolis,
Wednesday Afternoon, Sept. 3.

It appears that every steel-worker comes into this district sooner or later—certainly the crowds are large enough at the different plant gates. And that's the nearest I've got yet to a job—that and a pair of legs well wearied by walking from one gate to the other.

The system sure does rub it in that the time of a jobless man is of no value to himself or anybody else.

"All the hirin's done at the other gate," one policeman advised gruffly enough, as though he had something else of real importance on his mind.

"No hirin' done here except at five o'clock," was the word of his colleague at the other gate, more polite but no less definite and final.

"What do you want?" came in an insulting tone of voice from a tough-looking foreign-born worker as I stepped into the employment office at five o'clock after a half-day's loaf. It was a bold attempt to pose as a skilled or semi-skilled man entitled to walk inside, away from the unskilled crowd outside. But it didn't work. I was ordered out into the crowd of fifty or so negroes, Slavs, Greeks, Spaniards, Persians, and others standing around for the "hirin' at five."

It was fully six before a blue-coated but unimpressive Greek said in a good try at friendliness: "Back this way, fellows! Everybody back here."

So we all backed and huddled up against the fence and,

like a herd of cattle, turned our heads in the one direction —that of the hirer whose coming the order was supposed to herald.

After another long wait he came, leisurely enough, presumably in order to indicate that he was not unduly anxious to buy what we had to sell.

"Anybody here want to go on as labor in Open-hearth No. 2?" he asked as he looked at his white slips and moved through the crowd.

To my surprise only one or two volunteered, and they only after repeated invitations.

Ditto with the call for laborers in rail-mill, dock, coke-plant, and blast-furnace. When I volunteered for this last he considerately told me to wait and he'd hope to have something better soon.

"Sure, all these guys has had a crack at all them bum jobs—or else their friends has told 'em," explained a tanned and toughened young son of Greek parents when I asked what the matter was. "And them as has gone on here just now—you'll see 'em here to-morrow night tryin' for somethin' else. Who wants to work in open-hearth or checker-chambers this weather, huh? And they're all too dirty, anyway—and too hard. Look at them hands—them's from eleven and a half hours solid on them jobs—no chance to sit down and in the coke-plant no chance to wash-up—like them guys there."

Sure enough, there came by a dozen men as black and dirty as miners—and much harder to clean!—going off their twelve-hour turn.

"In rail-mill," added a hardy Pole, "alla time lift-'em up rail, push-'em up rail, pile-'em up rail. . . . Too heavy, no good."

Later he added that he had worked in another department three years without a break till nine days ago, when his boss—"He no like me and tell me 'get the h—— out,'

but superintendent he tell me 'stay.' But every day no can see him for get-'em back job."

A big chap with gold teeth and smooth-shaven, rosy cheeks, who appeared to hold himself above the common herd of us, proved to be a soaking-pit heater. He admitted most proudly earning an average of fifteen dollars per day by combination of time and tonnage.

"Well, I think it's comin' to me now—been at it fourteen years, since the days when I used to have to be carried home done up by the heat. In the last five years I've run six autos ragged. . . . Sure I'm independent. That's why I'm here. The boss at —— Steel Company tried to tell me somethin' about heatin', and I says, 'If you know this job so well,' I says, 'it's yours, you've got it,' I says, 'and you keep it.' —Gee, you should-a seen the look on his face! But I don't need to stay any place I don't want to."

Of course we got around to the danger of a nation-wide strike.

"Well, I know somethin' about strikes—I'm blacklisted now at X—— Steel Company, and I've been out in three big ones. And I'll bet any man the gang won't last two months. These darned foreigners won't stick—they cave in. Most of 'em simply can't live three weeks 'thout gettin' a piece of money somehow. No, sir, they're fightin' too much money for what they got in their jeans."

All this while the crowd was milling around the moving employment man like cattle around the man with the corn-basket.

"Anybody want to learn chipping? Good jobs to start chipping! . . . Where'd you work last, son? . . . And before that? All right—go and stand over there."

As he passed my rosy-cheeked friend, he whispered: "I'm keeping you in mind, but nothing yet."

By seven-thirty the purchaser of labor had gone inside and stayed so long that the crowd had to assume that the

market-house was closed until six o'clock in the morning, and so drifted away. Joining our cursings with the more violent ones of the crowd, a young Greek and I walked over to town and forgot our troubles in a movie. (He is planning to go back home as soon as he can find the money and accept his uncle's offer, earlier turned down, to educate him for medicine.)

Figuring on the usual delay, I joined him and a group of about eighty laborers a half-hour after the hiring hour of six this morning. It was seven when the Greek policeman shoved us back again against the fence and a clerk came out to look us over. His nose was very large and very disdainfully tilted, and gave him a very high-brow expression, but from his mouth there issued constantly a copious stream of very low-brow tobacco-juice—intended, doubtless, to alibi his nose and prove to us he was a regular fellow.

Again only a few accepted the invitation to "go on" to the jobs offered—many of them waiting for the better ones they expected, according to experience, to be given out later from the sheaf of white slips.

"Not a thing in that line," he said to me when I asked for "mill-wrightin', furnace, or machine-helpin'."

"Nothing yet," he whispered to a young Jewish boy of dapper clothes and appearance with whom I shortly got chummy.

He had been laid off his crane in a Pittsburgh mill and had waited at this gate twice daily for a month, living with his married sister meanwhile. He was getting discouraged and therefore sore. As we went away together to another mill after we had stood around the hiring-clerk for an hour and a quarter—besides the half-hour before that worthy appeared—the curse he let fly at the whole institution was terrible to hear. In support of it, he argued:

"Does it look reasonable? A great big mill like that

workin' thousands of men and never no crane-man taken on in a month! And they won't let me in to see a foreman or anybody! Aw, I tell you nothin' does a fellow any good but pull. You gotta have a drag or they treat you like cattle."

For most of our two-mile walk—till we hailed an obliging ice-cream truck driver—he took great pleasure in entertaining me with stories of his skill in getting the work out of a crane by the right working of the levers to "bridge" (move the crane's beams the length of the building), "hoist" (up and down from the floor), and "trolley" or "rack" (from one side to the other)—all at the same time "and never no smash-ups or call-downs from the boss."

He seems to possess the makings of a good worker. But it is easy to see that with another month of this his morale will be so broken that he will become a hopeless good-for-nothing, whether on the job or off. But anybody with any self-respect or any skill there at the gate—he and the others call it the "bull-pen"—will sympathize with the evolution of his thinkings and his feelings there on the hiring-line each evening and morning which made him sum up the purposes and plans of his immediate future with:

"But I'm almighty sure o' one thing—you won't catch me workin' myself to death when I *do* get in."

When we arrived finally at our destination, the pay-clerk told us to ask the watchman whether he had anything for us. That gentleman was very democratic, but the best he could do was to break the news to us gently that:

"All the hirin's at four. Be here at four."

We trudged another half-mile to another plant, feeling sure that its newness would mean work for us. The watchman was affable though dignified, but referred us to a very rough-looking employment manager, who in turn said there was nothing for a crane-man, but might be something on the hot-mills if I would "Be here at four."

So there you are—and here I am—still outside the gates. However, it looks good for a job this afternoon on the evening shift. I'll have to catch a little sleep and take my working clothes along so as to be ready for a night's work. Perhaps I should take my dinner, too, but I guess I'll gamble on some kind of a plant restaurant.

Here's hoping!

Calumetropolis,
Sept. 3, 8 P. M.

It certainly does get on a fellow's nerves—this constant disregard of the jobless job-seeker's time!

As instructed, I made sure this afternoon to be on hand at four all ready for that possible hot-mill job, and stood properly lined up with a couple of negroes who were getting their time-cards made out for going to work. But the clerk told me that he had nothing to do with the hiring, and the man who did was down-town.

To him and the watchman I reiterated: "But he told me to be here at four!"

The watchman asked some questions intended to indicate his belief that I was a liar. He also refused permission to go into the plant to see the hot-mill foreman. I never wanted to swear more. I did calm down, however, and gave myself the satisfaction of expressing to him, quite politely, my conviction that plant policemen in general—and I acted as if I didn't think he was one, his blue coat being off—cancel off about twenty per cent of the value of all the company spends in restaurants or other forms for securing the good-will of their employees. In less ruffled mood I'll cut it down to fifteen, but no lower, as previously stated. It is foolish for the management to point with pride to their positive efforts to get good-will and then never take a look at some of the things which are constantly negativing them.

To wear off the raspy edge of my disappointment, I walked

over to the —— plant. There the employment manager appeared quite human. He could give me nothing of a skilled sort, but would be glad to let me start in the yard, at from forty-two to sixty cents, according to what turned up. I agreed to come if my next try failed on the hot-mills. On the way to town I dropped into the company hotel for unmarried men. It's a wonder—handsome, clean, with tiled floors, shower-baths, all for about ten dollars a week, room and meals.

So now it's "Be here between seven and eight in the morning"—as usual. It's well I was born a grand hoper. But it makes a fellow feel that everything else worth while vanishes as hope vanishes when you see there at the gates some of those discouraged chaps who feel themselves gradually settling down a rung or two in the scale of respectability—from skilled or semiskilled to unskilled labor. The odd thing is to notice how easy it is to absorb all their moods myself. It takes an effort not to feel as sore at the company and the world as they do, even though it does not mean to me, as it threatens constantly to mean to them, the month-long difference between bed and no bed, food and no food, decency and indecency, now that my tour is almost ended.

Anyway, I'll try to sleep and dream of the white-collar world where my time used to be considered valuable—and hope for the best in the morning.

In the way of jollier things, by the way—and I need to think of them—I am reminded of my unsuccessful hunt for a steel job in a Massachusetts city last spring. After I had been at five gates without result, I bought a paper and looked at the Help Wanted column. Sure enough there it was—in big letters, too—"*Must Have Experienced Steel*——"

By that time I was getting out my paper and lead-pencil to take down the address, glowing with pleasure meanwhile at my brilliancy in thus discovering the well-hidden oppor-

tunity. Then I read the small print—and woke up. It read: "*Must Have Experienced Steel* stitchers on high-grade corsets."

Calumetropolis
Sept. 4.

Right thumb and fingers almost strike at the thought of grasping even a pen after the work they have been doing for seven hours to-day. But still they share in the general delight at having found a job—besides having played so well their part in the "virile and moving drama" of the day—it might be entitled "Forty Buckets o' Sweat." It certainly *was* "moving"; because that's the job—it's called the "drag-out" by the men, and "pair-heater's helper" by the management—and it takes something "virile," all right, to stand up to it.

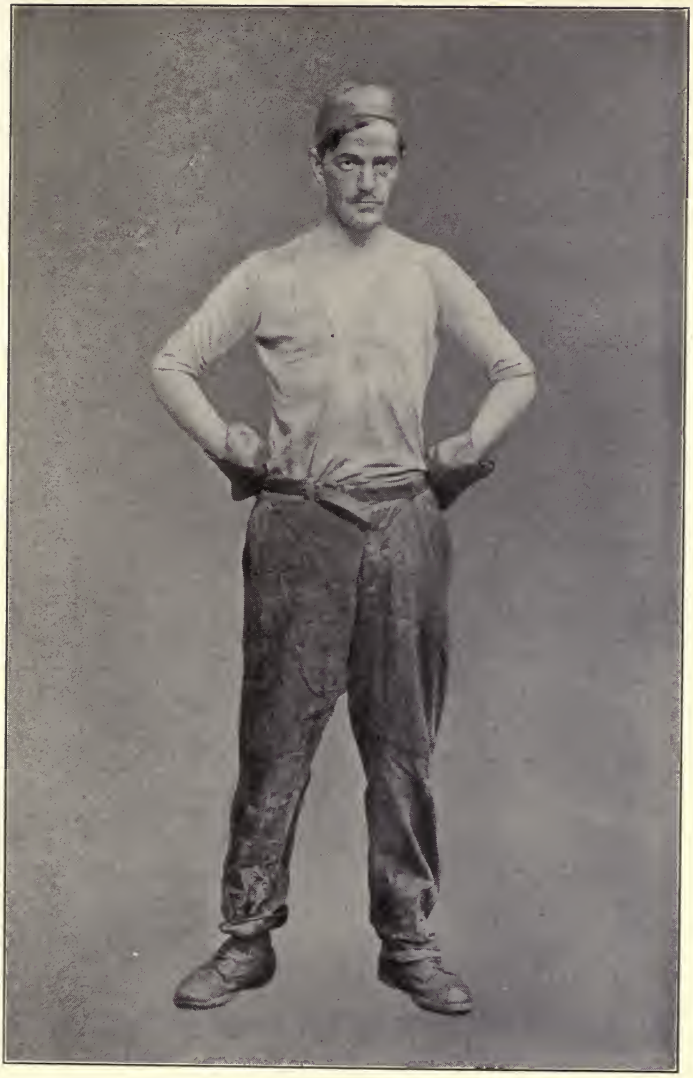
It all came from my lucky mention there at the gate this morning of one of the company's other plants where I worked on the cold rolls last winter in Episode II. A half-hour later I was being examined by the doctor. It seems ungrateful to mention it, for I was mighty glad to get, finally, on the hot-mills. But it is worth noticing that fifteen minutes after he told me I'd evidently picked up a near-rupture on some job, I was doing the heaviest job of lifting encountered to date. (That is, after all, pretty typical —too much of this betterment idea seems not to have got out of the service building and right into the job where—and only where—it can save the worker's sweat and skin and blood. *That's* where he wants it.)

It seems that the "drag-out's" job is first to put the pairs of cold steel in the form of "sheet-bar" onto the "peel" or heavy iron flat bar or paddle with which the pair-heater pushes them back into the hottest parts of his furnace. During the whole of the morning it was given as law and gospel that these bars had to be picked up and carried over to the peel four at a time. After the heater had told

me that each of them weighed thirty-five pounds—they're about thirty inches long, six wide, and one thick—I knew why it was that my back sort of squeaked every time I had to lift four of them practically off the floor—it was not so bad when they could be taken off the top of the pile. The new and younger chap who was supposed to help me threw his gloves down after a few of those liftings and trips over to the peel and walked off the job. The other boy put in his place had to stop every few minutes and massage his arm out of the cramps—until we prevailed upon the heater to let us make it in two trips of two bars each. Later in the day we worked up to three again, and with a few days of practice I suppose four would be O. K.

After "charging" in this way one of the furnace compartments, we would start taking out of the other the pairs heated hot enough to be rolled. This means taking hold of the hottest pairs with our tongs after edging them off the pile, dropping them onto the floor, squeezing the tongs tight together for a fresh hold again between thumb and hand, and then walking off the forty or fifty feet to the "roughing rolls," where the "rougher" helps lift them onto the mill for pushing through to the "catcher" on the other side, the two of them pushing them through and lifting them back over the heavy rolls until they are thin enough to be swung deftly over to the finishing rolls near by—other hot pairs being led up to him meanwhile. Most of the bars worked on the turn were on their way to automobiles, though others go into machinery, onto roofs, into tanks, etc. Before you work out the properly polite way to sidle up to a red-hot furnace mouth for the capture of the pairs, you are likely to use your fingers a number of times to see if your eyebrows are still with you. Luckily, running-water permitted frequent wettings of face and neck and wrists.

But at that a chap gets a lot of satisfaction out of feeling



THE AUTHOR AS A STEEL WORKER

As the "drag-out" or "pair heater's helper" in the "hot mills," which roll the steel sheets for automobiles, tanks, roofs, etc.

that he's doing the work of a regular "he" fellow. Mighty few sounds in my life have given me more satisfaction than the sizzle of the water in the bosh or trough as I put into it my first pair of red-hot tongs. The big worry is to wonder whether you can do it until four o'clock without letting anybody see the color of your tongue. One way I saved myself was to tell myself regularly, as I started out with my pair properly tonged: "Now don't get fussed. This sweat won't hurt you. Keep going but take it easy—like you was walking down Fifth Avenue." (I find I'm beginning to *think* in bad grammar!)

But what helped most was the kindly advice of the heater and the boss roller to "Don't get excited and you'll learn it all right. Watch out for the tricks of it and so save your strength. It's sleight more than strength that does it."

Then's the time the new man comes to know the innate character of his superiors and associates, whether it's good or bad. And that of my crowd is undoubtedly good.

The heater said it was one of the hardest of turns because it was all what he calls "single iron," and so did not call for the special heating and handling by the rollers of "double iron," which gives us pair-heaters a breathing-spell. There simply was no let-up all day of charge and drag out, charge and drag out. But I stood it so well that for to-morrow I've dated up for an encore and a long turn besides.

During the morning one of the bosses asked if my experience in the other plant would make me consider an assistant foremanship in the cold rolls. Of course, now that I'm so near through my adventure, I have to take every such chance. So, after finishing the eight-hour "go" on the hot mills at four to-morrow, I start at five-thirty on the twelve-hour night turn with my old friends the cold rolls—and the dignity of an assistant foreman.

From here it looks like submerging down into a sea of the pink, quivering heat and the yellow-red sheet-bar of the

furnaces and of sweat—coming up for air on top of a pile of steel sheets somewhere in the middle of next week!

Calumetropolis,
Sunday afternoon, Sept. 7.

It certainly is the dickens to crawl out from under the strain and sweat of two days of hot work crowded into one, and then find you've got no money to get anything to eat. The only compensation is that for a while you're too sleepy and tired to care about eating. But at that I can't think with much pleasure of that almost foodless trail from Friday midnight to this morning. Still it has helped me to get the feel of the man in hard lines—though it has also given my belief in human nature a severe jolt.

But let me lead into the desert of hunger as I came into it. Luckily the eight hours on the furnace brought mostly "double" and "light" bar—with decent breathing-spells after we finished charging. One of the day's best pointers came from a strong and energetic colored man who has worked up to the position of rougher.

"If yo've been workin' on time yoh got to get a entire new idea now that yoh's heah on tonnage. Heah yoh's got to remembah that the moh wo'k yoh does, the moh money yoh gets. Yoh's wo'kin' now *foh yohself*—just keep a-thinkin' o' that all the time. And futhamoh, yoh can't make good money heah unless *everbody else* has exactly thet same idea. If one fellow on the crew begins to go slow, everybody that sees him slows up—'thout thinkin', they all slows up. If they sees yoh goin' strong, that helps them to go stronger and *everbody* makes moh money. It takes time for yoh fellows from the labor gang wheah yoh's been wo'kin' foh the company to get that."

He's a wise chap. Such good teaching must have come from experience.

I did my best. All the same I was glad it wasn't yesterday

—the heater himself said: "They come near havin' my hide hung up here on the furnace wall yesterday with all that single iron." Also I thanked all the stars for the eight-hour turn.

"I've been around steel and furnaces for nearly twenty years," said the roller, "and I tell you I've worked mighty little on the twelve-hour turn, and, furthermore, I wouldn't have anything to do with it if you gave me the mill."

He gets an average of, say, twenty-eight dollars every turn he works. He has to have experience, know-how, leadership, and responsibility. The rolls are sensitive; a draft of wind on them may spoil a five-hundred-dollar investment. He's a good leader, too—and a good leader is worth his hire. It's a delight to see the spirit and skill and teamwork with which the crew do their work rapidly, yet keep out of each other's way, every man knowing just at what instant he must swing in with his tongs and carry on the process, while the other chap, thus freed, turns and takes the hot sheet from the one farther down the line.

"Why a fellow who works day after day on the twelve-hour shift feels like going home every morning before breakfast and slapping his grandmother! It's bad enough after eight here on the furnaces," the heater added.

I'm for a good stiff gait at work that takes a man to stand up to it, for a proper period, and then be through. Furthermore, I'm sure that most workers would rather have it that way than to take a slow, namby-pamby gait for a long period.

"The best turn we ever had on that gauge!" he said as we washed up at four, while the next crew took off their coats and put on their sweat-caps.

From five-thirty on—after a trip into town for supper—most of the job was to watch the cold-roll foreman and so learn how to polish the rolls so the day men can start in without delay. It was misery to have to keep awake after

the day's exertions with the tongs and the bar—until the boss said at three that that would be all for the night, and let it be seen that sleep in some corner was in order. A word to the wise—and weary!

It was a pleasure to meet the men in the department and to see how much better some of the details of cold-rolling were handled than in the other plant—especially to learn that here the management has been wise enough to call the helper the "second catcher," and so to let him share on the tonnage rolled. Apparently most of my inner unhappiness back there would have been avoided if I had only been cold-roll helper here.

At midnight and at breakfast-time I was too tired to want much at the restaurant, but did make the error of spending for a meal-book my last two dollars, being perfectly confident of the arrival of the check wired for to take the place of that owed me, but not waited for, at the last plant.

The shower-bath in the dirty boarding-house was a godsend. No money had been wired, but very hopefully I got up at noon and spent seventeen of my last twenty-five cents on a malted milk. With only eight cents in my pocket my stomach began to inquire how about having to do a twenty-four-hour shift of loafing with nothing in it to work on. It seemed a good chance to test the idea I've always had that a man of education and a bank-account could always cash at least a small check on his face. So I looked up a minister, asked him to keep the secret, told him what I was up to, and offered documentary proof of my statements.

My optimism got the surprise of its life! He stated his complete belief in the truth of my statements, refused to feel it necessary to look at the documents—and then added:

"But every time I have done that I have been deceived, so that I have promised my wife never to do it again."

A banker whom he called up seemed to think it completely

inconceivable that he should be expected to cash a check for, say, five dollars not as a bank officer but as a human being, and similarly refused to look at my documents.

I was sore to have my pet idea busted. My nerve wavered at asking my landlady for credit, and a full explanation would be embarrassing. The thing was getting serious—I was becoming very hungry.

At the telegraph office where I had become a regular hourly caller a young lady obligingly accepted my offer to sell her three penny stamps for two cents. So with these two added to my other eight I paid a nickel to ride out to the plant restaurant to use my meal-ticket. Again the policeman squashed my little idea, as might have been expected:

"Nothin' doin' here Saturday nights, young fellow."

For me it was "nothin' doin'" but to walk back to town with my fingers playing with my last nickel—my mind revolving around the same article, having apparently moved down from under my hatband to under my belt. I hoped somebody might try to hold me up. I was going to offer to go fifty-fifty with him if he'd cash me a small check.

Well, "I'll say" that hunger and fatigue sure do make a bad pair. At that, they were for me not so terrible, of course, as for the man who has no idea when it's going to end. Hunger I knew on the cattle-boat, but hardly hunger and fatigue. The best investment of my whole career to date, bar none, was a big apple which the clerk handed me over for my final, ultimate nickel. I Fletcherized for the last of the two miles or so into town, sent another wire for money, and in general disgust went to bed empty of food though still hopeful—and certainly very sympathetic with the hungry and tired everywhere.

In the morning I succeeded in standing off my nice, quiet, and sweet-mannered landlady for a breakfast by mention-

ing a letter "I expect to-day." (She's all right but she confines her efforts to the kitchen, and husband is only a distant relative of that lady whose claim to fame is that she "chases dirt.")

Of course one of the serious sides to the foodless weekend was that I can't draw a check on my alias, and might get into trouble if I told my real name to the landlord. This living a double life with two names is not as simple as it's cracked up to be.

The boarders have taken me in very well and certainly do not tone down their remarks about the heads of the town's plants for the ears of any one. The net deduction is that "If they had to try it a few times they'd see that these long hours are hell, all right." There seems some difference of opinion as to whether the workers can stand a long strike, though the majority seem to think that the present uncertainty as to strike or no strike is worse than the actuality could ever be. It is evident that the whole town senses the seriousness of the situation.

"Why," says the landlord, "even when the railway strike was coming off I lost thirty roomers. No, we don't like strikes—not after just finishing paying for some new repairs."

I judge from what I hear in the stores that the town people agree that the long day is the chief thing which makes the men willing to join the union. The hot-mill men seem to have little interest in the whole matter in view of their short turn and good tonnage pay, even though the sliding scale on which their pay is based has forced a cut in pay following the temporarily lessened price of sheets.

It's pleasant to think that there is no "bar" to drag or rolls to polish until to-morrow night.

Later.—Have just chanced onto two workers with interesting results:

"Me? I work no more in steel-plant—so no can strike," one of them testified. He is evidently a man of Slavic birth. "Why? Well, like thees. Fife year ago I work een —— plant—een roll gang. One day I haf w'at you call fit. For few minute no can do nothing. Boss he see me do nothing. He swear. I say: 'Just minute, please, sir. Dees fit God send me—I no blame. Een one minute I all right again.' But he go on swear and call me name. Den I grab bench and say 'my mother no dog,' and he afraid and say 'You fired!' And ever since when I ask for work dere my name black and no can catch job."

"You bet I'm going out with the boys!" said one of the most skilled-looking Americans I have seen. "No, I've nothing to gain myself—I'm on eight hours and tonnage—and make good money. But those guys workin' the long turns will need all the help they can get. For myself I don't expect to gain anything—and may lose my job."

"Well, there's one thing I've got against the company. 'Twas nine years ago that several of us boys went and told the super of our department we wished he could cut out the eighteen-hour turns every other Sunday. Seein' we was on tonnage we was sure we could do just as much—yes, and more—without it: it made us that near dead the rest of the week. None of your ultimatums, you understand. Just a request—a gentleman's request. What does he do but rear up and bang the table and swear he's runnin' this plant, and by the Almighty he'll run it as he sees fit—and all that. Well, when he comes it that way—you know how 'tis—of course we had to rear up too and call the boys out. We stayed out several months—and it was bad goin', I tell you. And later I got on where the hours was right and worked up to a good job again. But—well, I'm willin' to get into this scrap just to show that I'm for some of the boys—even though they's foreigners—that's still on them turns—and under such bosses."

Calumetropolis,
September 8.

Guess I'll have to take back what I said somewhere in these pages about living conditions not bothering much if a fellow's good and tired. Just now it looks as though they have a way of crawling into a fellow's attention at just the times when he can least stand to think about them. Just as a youngster of five cries over annoyances in the evening which wouldn't bother him in the morning, so a dirty boarding-house seems, somehow, doubly dirty when you come home weary in the dawn from a long, hard, twelve-hour night turn and try to blot it all out as you crawl in between your sheet—your *one* sheet and your blanket. It seems, too, to take the pleasure out of life to wake up after only a few hours' sleep and in the broad daylight observe that you are not the only living thing in your bed—and then to consider that you'd probably observe an even larger numerousness of your bedfellows if it weren't for the unfair advantage of camouflage protection afforded them by the color of the blanket and the absence of that second sheet. (According to report, cooties are common in good society in this mill-town in which are so many itinerant workers.)

As following from much the same cause, probably, the moral conditions are too bad to describe. Improvement can, however, be reported for at least the strictly local situation—meaning right here in the boarding-house, in fact on my own floor and hallway—because orders to vacate have been given to-day—a little tardily—to the two recently arrived young women roomers.

Whiskey is still available in the back room of any of the saloons where you are known, but at prices which, as one of my heater friends put it, "makes a good bun too blamed much of a luxury."

The other night, by the way, when this heater had visited more back rooms than was good for him, I had to

keep whispering to him that everybody *knew* that he was one of the best heaters in the country, and that it wasn't necessary for him to shout so loudly that: "Yes, sir, I just told him that if he could get a better heater than I was he could go and do it and be hanged. Why, buddy, that old fool of a melter knows that I know more in a minute 'bout makin' steel—special steel, y' understand—than he does in a week. That's the reason he won't promote me," etc., etc. Apparently the attractiveness of whiskey is that it offers one way of fulfilling the wishes of sobriety—a false fulfilment of those hopes which remain so difficult of fulfilment under actual conditions. In that case the man who drinks is at least continuing to dream of and hope for those fulfilments—and so to possess, still, something of a mainspring or motive for his upbuilding, provided its escapement can be better controlled and directed.

The mayor is said to be doing his best to make it a good town: schools, libraries, "Y," street drinking-fountains, pavements, and many such things all point in the right direction. As nearly as I can judge, a good deal of the smoke from the mills blows off into the open country, but some part of it must make a lot of work for the town's housewives. Most of these, however, seem to be young and strong—though, from what I can see here on my own floor and windows and in many of the houses on the street, I fear that after a certain amount of fighting with the dirt, an armistice is arranged in which the dirt is granted considerable liberty—and the housewives proportionate peace and leisure.

On the job last night my boss broke me in quite properly by letting me do the greater part of the roll-polishing. It is a very dirty job and the "cold rolls"—they get hot even though the metal goes through them cold—cause an enormous amount of sweating in such a mugginess as last night's. In between times I tried to work out my idea to make the

work a little easier, especially for the new second catcher. After I had brought him a board on which he could take a seat in his "spell," the old roller who was pushing the sheets to him very fast asked me if I couldn't find a cushion. All the same, the young fellow was so done up when the whistle blew that I doubt if he thinks the money worth the effort, even with the help of my board. Besides, he was not as lucky as I was in having in his roller a boss who pulled out his watch at three-thirty, and with as much definiteness as if he had heard the whistle blow, say:

"Good Lord! if we do any more, the day gang won't have anything to do! To the devil with it; let's hit the hay!"

On the whole—well, I can think with a fair degree of equanimity of making to-night the last of my nights on the job, having been at it off and on since January 30, and fearing further absence will make it too hard to get back and think and talk in ordinary language.

This morning, by the way, when I was very tired and had to listen, for some reason or other, to an especially outrageous lot of blasphemy and filth, I made a note of this: It would have been impossible to give any one the feeling of my conversational and other surroundings without bringing in a good deal of profanity, and at least some of what might be called vulgarity. But if any one thinks I have come within a mile of giving an idea of the real thing, he has another think coming—or, as I suppose I should say, his belief is largely erroneous. What I have tried to pass over should be taken and multiplied by, say, 100—or, to make allowance for the presumption that all the dirt of my present surroundings has crawled in under my skin and into my system and allowed to stay there by the lack of sleep which seems always connected with night-work, I'll call it 50 instead of 100. This revolting filth of speech is the most disappointing thing I have found in my travels. But I am

still sure it is connected with long hours and with the difficulty a worker has in expressing in his work his individuality and in feeling himself progressing—that together with the necessity of his showing himself as good as the next man in whatever lines of competition may be set up in his group.

Same Place,
The Day After.

Packed and ready for the train to Cleveland—glad to be able to report my last night on the job as being the stiffest of all; there's been nothing of the "petering out" idea!

Sure enough that second catcher failed to turn up last night—he was reported "done up." The first catcher was on hand and going strong until twelve—I would not have had the courage to urge him to save himself because he has been on the cold rolls longer than I. But at twelve he, too, was all in from the stiff pace his roller set him, and a cold. By that time I was well tired, too, from a full six and a half hours of pushing the polishing-stones onto the hot rolls—the night was fearfully muggy and hot. The regular three-thirty knock-off for sleep was looking good to me at twelve-thirty when I came back from the restaurant. To my great surprise I was told that the catcher had gone home and I was to take his place. Bluffing experience in that particular way of doing it, and without any helper, I had to catch and pile—part of the time in very high piles—about ten tons of stiff, heavy sheets as they came through the rolls as fast as the roller could push them. It tested me to the limit. When at six the whistle finally blew for the end of the turn—for the night and for my long labor shift begun last January!—I took off my dripping shirt and wrung, I'd say, close to a small wine-glass of sweat out of it—to say nothing of all that had dropped from my face onto the rolls and the sheets.

As often before, I noticed how fatigue is partly muscular and partly mental—how thirty seconds of the sheets going wrong and piling up and making a fellow feel himself a "dub" and getting him in bad with his buddy is much more tiring than thirty minutes of steady-going, rhythmic catch-lift-and-throw.

"Worry wearies worse than work"—every foreman should say it fast and often. "Worry wearies worse than work."

It must be said also that it didn't make the work go any easier to think, as I stood and dripped sweat and gritted my teeth to keep going at the roller's speed, all that last hour and a half, that my immediate superior officer was snoozing in his office with the lights out! And I didn't love the company any harder, either, for having no locker for good clothes and no shower-bath to prevent my having to go with all my sweat-drenched clothes out into the rain and darkness of the drizzly dawn.

However, this company has my respect for the relations it has established with its men both here and at the other plant. I doubt greatly if it has much trouble in the approaching strike unless the union members from other plants make it impossible for the men here to go to work. Furthermore, I got my money without a great deal of difficulty this afternoon after giving notice at twelve o'clock. Of the three of us who were asked why we were leaving, one said he wanted to get away and into another line of work before the strike caught him. There's one unhappy boarding-house keeper already!

Have imported all possible fresh clothes from the haberdashery and the tailors, piled them on to white paper on the floor, and worked the shower-bath to the limit. I hope hard to leave all my little friends behind. Nevertheless, it will probably be necessary to park my baggage in the garage before reporting to my family. Hardly what could be

called a triumphal return! But for all that a happy one—with arms and shoulders stronger and huskier, head saner, and heart, I hope, wholesomer than before.

Later.—Stepping off the sleeper this morning, the newspaper bore the headlines clear across its top:

"*Steel Strike Set for September* 22."

PART II

FINDINGS

CHAPTER XI

SOME OUTSTANDING IMPRESSIONS

June, 1920.

AND now, what of it? What does it all mean?

Certainly the most outstanding impression of all is that I found my companions in the labor gangs so completely human and so surprisingly normal. It makes me smile at myself now as I recall the air of mystery and "different-ness" with which my mind had surrounded all these workers back there in the days before I started out to join them. I feel like apologizing to them now for all my wonderings as to whether I could meet the test of their suspicion or the strain of their possible misunderstanding and probable ill will. My only excuse is that these same wonderings were quite manifestly in the minds of practically all my white-collared friends before I set off. If, perhaps, they were also in the minds of my readers as well, I shall certainly hope that the foregoing pages press this point home —namely, that my hard-working associates—my "buddies," as I now think of them—are enormously more like all the other members of our national House of Industry and Life than they are *un*like them.

In every room of that house, also, all seem to find life just about the same nip-and-tuck problem of hopes and fears, satisfactions and disappointments, pleasures and annoyances; in general, pretty much the same mixture properly described as "this pleasing, anxious being." Wherever found, too, these humans seem just about equally ready and anxious to tell about these hopes and fears, these satisfactions and disappointments, to any one who will present an ear which is manifestly and sincerely sympathetic.

As I look over the experiences and testimonies reported, I find myself wishing that I could add some of the conversations held with workers and others during the months following my return to well-dressed ways. For these, of course, have contributed to the final impressions without being given to the reader. Perhaps, however, the reader himself has recently heard such testimony as that of the elevator girl and her greeting to me:

"Where you been all this time? . . . Yes, this uniform ain't so bad, but, all the same, it's why I'm goin' to quit to-morrow. . . . Well, you see, I'm on what they call the 'split shift'—a few hours on, then a few hours off, and back again. That makes me change into or out of these clothes four times a day. I can't see it."

Next to this fundamental humanness of all of us, wherever we are, the outstanding impression, as I try to marshal the various experiences in single file past the reviewing-stand of memory, is certainly this: the most important factor of all in the life of the wage-worker is the job—the daily job. For him the day commences with the breathing of the prayer, "Give us this day our daily job." That is the only way in which the daily bread may be spelled with satisfaction and contentment in a civilization organized for the mass production required for meeting a fast-moving world's mass needs.

It almost makes me shiver with the cold of those February mornings before the great factory gates when I think of the heart-sick dejection, the demoralizing loss of standing as a man, and the paralyzing fear of the bread line which fill the mind and soul of the man who, after days of seeking, has no job and knows not where to find one. This impression has been greatly strengthened by many recent conversations, both with laborers and executives. Some of these latter say that they still recall more vividly than anything else the hours and days and weeks back there twenty or

thirty years ago in the foundry or machine shop, spent in the fear that a lay-off might be required by the company's business or that discharging somebody might appear to the foreman as the best way for him to ease his mind from some of his vexations. All that I have seen or heard or felt combines to make me believe that it is impossible to see the world as the worker sees it without looking at it through the eyes of the man to whom the need of the daily bread—together with the need of the daily hope—means the need of the daily job.

We are quite likely, also, to miss the real point when we assume so blithely that an overplus of men in New York can easily be remedied by the reported overplus of jobs in, say, Chicago. Unless the finding of work and the allotment of men to it throughout the country is far better organized than at present, the job in Chicago does precious little good to the jobless man in New York—especially if he is unskilled. For, in the nature of the case, the worker who must earn his living by his naked as well as untrained hands is not likely to possess a financial margin sufficient to bridge the distance. The paying or the advancing of his fare has its difficulties and involves considerable risk, especially for the man of family. The saving of fare by the use of the "side-door Pullman" or by "riding the rods" means the endangering of both his body and his morale by exposing these to the degenerating irregularity of the hobo, or, as he calls himself, "the migratory worker."

One look at the world through the eyes given by this daily need of work, also, makes it immensely easier to understand the worker's attitude toward the restriction of output—"stringing out the job." Whether we like it or not, even a short experience will convince any one that the workman has considerable right to fear, as a practical, day-by-day proposition, that by working too hard or too well he may work himself out of his job—that by producing too

much he may produce himself out of that indispensable daily bread. Especially to the man hired by the day, the whistle for the end of the turn may announce not so much the beginning of his hours of rest as the foreman's "Here y'are, Jo! This'll get your 'time.' Won't need you tomorrow. Work's all done"—and the beginning of that hopeless circuit of the gates in search of further opportunity to earn his "time." The thought of even a few weeks of that is often reason enough to make the worker feel highly doubtful about the introduction of machinery—very hesitant to accept the calm assurance of the economists that he need have no fear because the whole thing is bound to work out in the long run through the increased production and the resultant cheapening of goods. Naturally enough, with his family on his mind, he fears this "long run" may be so long that his self-respect may be destroyed, even though starvation be avoided, before the slack is taken up. Still further, there seems to be general admission from both workers and executives that unexpectedly large production under an attractive piece-rate has often brought about the rate's reduction. If that is true, it is not strange if the worker often feels it his duty to himself and his friends not to gamble too much upon the permanency of the arrangement.

The understanding of this fundamental importance of the daily job helps also to an understanding of the labor-union. In addition to its more public appearances, on behalf of better wages and hours, the union is likely to be quietly busy helping to find work for its members and then to protect them against unjust firing, to much the same effect as was mentioned so often in support of the representative committee there in the oil refinery. It is impossible to help wondering if the unions would have grown to anything like their present size if all the managers who find them so serious a problem had felt more keenly how seriously

this problem of the daily job touches the life and soul of the worker. In any event it is beyond the slightest doubt that nothing like proper happiness—and therefore proper effectiveness—is by any means to be expected in the industrial world until more thinking and more organization have been devoted to the increase of security for the country's working hands and heads in this regard—along lines to be suggested in later pages.

The recent months of plenteous jobs are, I am sure, not at all sufficient to affect the value of this fundamental necessity of the job as a keystone to the whole arch of the problem of industrial relations. The result of such months is merely to make the restless situation worse by urging the worker to make good use of the occasion to get acquainted with the advantages and disadvantages of as many different employers as possible during what he is certain will be only a temporary period because an abnormal one. When—next week or next month—things begin to get back to what he is convinced is their normal tightness, he will know what plant furnishes, all things considered, the best combination of the securities and opportunities he hopes for. If a worker has saved a little ahead, such an "inspection tour" may be as good an investment as spending it in loafing or on some of the ordinary luxuries—especially if in the meantime he finds about as much security at the last place as he had originally!

It will surely appear natural enough that the next impression which marches in on my memory is that of tiredness and the connection of this tiredness with its unheavenly twin, temper. Together these two certainly make a vicious circle which deserves the thought of all those desiring either a better industry or a better and safer America. Tiredness seems to cause earlier temper with hardly greater regularity than temper, with its inner friction, causes earlier tiredness. Happiness, either in the plant or the home,

appears to be unthinkable in connection with regular work-shifts longer than ten hours at the most. Apparently, too, this happiness—together with good citizenship—is impossible with the long factory turns without much reference to the question of the nature of the work. One of the most violent denunciations of the twelve-hour shift came from a plant policeman:

"Why, you guys that work on the floor up there in the open-hearth can go home and go to bed and keep yourselves in good shape. But when we chaps have sat here all day at the gate, we've got to take an hour's exercise or two before turnin' in or we begin to get fat and slumpy. This twelve hours is the devil all right."

The bulk of our iron and steel should no longer be made and rolled into the heavier forms on the twelve-hour day and the seven-day week. For the labor gang and for the furnace men it seems beyond question that management must plan somehow to find enough things for a man to do in eight, or at most ten hours, to justify the payment of a satisfactory wage and, at the same time, not too much work for the preservation of the worker's physical stamina. There can be no question in my mind but that the long turns are uneconomic and wasteful from the view-point of plain dollars and cents. I shrink with proper shame when I recall the gait we workers took in the moving of those bricks from the furnaces or the "checkers"—a gait that required careful observation to determine whether we were moving or not. I remember, however, that even that gait sufficed to bring all the weariness that could be borne either by me, the greenhorn, or by my friends, the old-timers. Certainly all of us grew, almost daily, less and less worthy of the wages we were paid. Certainly, too, few if any foremen prove able to stand the strain to the point of such loyalty to the company as suffices to keep them awake night after night. With the long turns added to the seven-

day week, it just is not humanly possible. Whether foreman or worker, such men are paid for energies which they simply are not able to deliver.

If it is true, as a member of the War Labor Board reports, that 98 per cent of the disputes they were asked to solve simmered down finally to some petty dispute between a foreman and a man, then I am willing to wager that the majority of this 98 per cent would be found to have occurred when both foreman and worker were just plain tired. Such ill humor, the doctors are assuring us, is the one unfailing sign and symptom of such tiredness. Many foremen, I am sure, are regularly working too long hours: in many cases their responsibilities call for longer turns from them than from the men under them. Indeed, in some cases it would appear that the whole organization, from the president down to the humblest shoveller, is pushing itself too hard in order to meet some emergency which is allowed to stretch itself over the weeks and months until every one under the plant roof is "on edge" and the stage is set for trouble.

Whether tiredness and temper—T. & T.—are caused by bad conditions of working or of living, I am convinced that they constitute an explosive which is almost as destructive as the "T. N. T." of warfare in its effects on the firing line of our daily lives and along the larger front of our national safety and development. "A man swears to keep from crying; a woman cries to keep from swearing," is a saying recently heard that substantiates the "philosophy of profanity" originally set down in explanation of the "detonations" encountered there on my first long-hour job. The connection of these "twins" with the sleep-inducing virtues of the "whiskey-beer" of the same town has been made, I think, sufficiently plain.

There can be no doubt, also, that "T. and T." constitutes a serious menace to the whole country in the way it persuades its possessor to listen sympathetically to the words

of the agitator. Any one who has carried these twins for days sitting upon his own body and soul wants to counsel every good citizen to beware of the daily head-lines which blame all industrial difficulties upon the I. W. W., sower of dissension. It would get us all much farther along if we only would inquire whether tiredness does not supply one reason why these presumably happy and contented persons listen as much as they do to those agitators. It is nearer the whole truth to believe that the agitator earns, or at least works for, the salt of his daily bread by rubbing it into the raw spots and sore spots which our public opinion and our industrial intelligence allow to exist. Of such raw spots and sore spots one great and continuous cause is contributed by these twins. It is largely a needless and a preventable cause because it represents such low-speed work and such high-speed deterioration. Democracy is not safe in any country where there are hundreds of thousands of tired—chronically tired—men or, for that matter, women. For that reason, if no other, those workers who want to "make a stake" quickly either for themselves here or their families, or that farm "back in old countree," and so ask for the long turns, should be refused.

The problem of the agitator and his hearing goes over, of course, into the field of ignorance and its opposite in education. Even tired minds would not give the credence they give to the agitator's false statements—"For every dollar you earn your employer earns ten," or "You earn your wages in two hours of work, what you earn in the other ten or twelve makes his profit"—if education, inside the plant or out, put into those minds what it should. The point is that the installing of proper facts and information are quite impossible when those minds are chronically tired. Indeed, almost all the constructive educational and social agencies set up by a public which wants to be helpful are sure to fail of their mission if they finally impinge upon

persons who would be happy to profit from them if only they were not too tired to care. "Want of interest is worse than want of knowledge" if only because without it knowledge is impossible.

Thus the third impression, which marches out like those silent timbers which came forward from the black corridors of the mine, is closely connected with the second: the worker's ignorance—the unskilled, the semiskilled, and, yes, the skilled worker's ignorance—of the plans and purposes, the aims and ideals—the character—of his employer, the company.

This ignorance is not strange. The work of obtaining a mutual understanding between the industrial manager and the great mass of workers who have rushed in during the last few years from all over the known world for taking up their tools in our vast scheme of modern production, is colossal! It takes one's breath away to contemplate it! This is especially true of steel, in which America has suddenly forged to the front as the producer of more steel than all the rest of the world combined. This work, too, is one whose accomplishment must necessitate time—time with the help of patience, and, most of all, of sympathy. Meanwhile, it must be understood that the great means for that mutual knowledge which must be added to by mutual sympathy to make mutual understanding, will grow immensely faster by demonstration than by exhortation. The seeing of the thing done—the thing which actually happens—this constitutes the great primer by which the minds of practically all of us learn the greatest lessons. Statements, arguments, logical exposition, whether by ink or breath: these for virtually all of us are mere foot-notes on the page of practical instruction and learning. One or two, possibly three or four, demonstrations seen unmistakably in the doing of our work and taken into the inner sanctum of our experiences—these give us our fixed ideas and attitudes, and

so supply the real roots of our education. Perhaps it is well that it is so, otherwise we might believe the false teachers and preachers instead of casting them out when the demonstration given by their lives and works fails to support their words. At any rate, the worker is not to be blamed if he considers his driving foreman or that grouchy gate policeman or that mean-minded paymaster or his pompous clerk quite as fully and as properly a representative of the company's real purposes as the solicitous employment manager or the friendly nurse—or if he sets the manifest waste of materials off against the company's narrow figuring of its wage rates. For that reason it must be granted that much of the distrust of great corporations is not based so much upon ignorance as, in too many cases, upon bad demonstration. Nor can the better understanding be obtained merely by the addition of truer demonstrations—unless the good-will is really there to be demonstrated. The solution requires a sincere purpose within the soul of both parties in the relationship and then the conviction that every single contact between the two is sure to be understood as a revelation of that purpose. Especially in the case of the great concerns which now maintain these relationships under the supervision of absentee management, a successful outcome requires an amount of attention which is nothing less than tremendous. Where the executive in immediate and close-hand charge feels that his sensibilities in the particular understanding of a delicate situation—and matters of human relationships are never anything but delicate—are practically bound to be rendered worthless after passing through a thousand miles of postal communication, there is set up a hopelessness and a mechanicalness which is sure, in time, to dull those sensibilities. Sooner or later, such dulled and injured sensibilities, on one side or the other, are pretty likely to mean the severed relations which, as recent history proves, are but the vestibule to war.

For all these reasons it is extremely superficial of us to think that we can solve the problem of happy industrial relations or happy American citizenship for the foreign-born worker merely by juggling with the phrase of "Americanization." The word itself should be dispensed with because it assumes so blithely that what we have already can profit from nothing they can bring—and that whatever they bring can be made suitable if they will only let us teach them English and show them the street to the court-house! No Americanism is worth our effort to obtain unless it is an Americanism of good-will—good-will built upon understanding. And this good-will and understanding of America must be gained, after all, in exactly the same way as the understanding of the company and its purposes—by demonstration. It is for us, therefore, to look more to the demonstrations of a likable or unlikable Americanism which are given every time a foreman commands, a judge instructs, a salesman sells, or a newspaper reports, assumes, or exhorts. It is idle to suppose that the teacher of English is going to make his printed pages offset all the force of the demonstrations of all the other contacts which the worker makes from day to day with all of us. It is folly also for us to assume that all our teachings must wait upon his learning of his English. There are many, many things which should be gotten over, through his own language, to the worker whose years may now be too advanced or whose working hours are much too long to permit the learning of our tongue in time to be of service to us. In the making of these contacts, also, and especially if we have in mind his joining an English class, we should try to reach the worker not so much through his friends and compatriots at the plant, but through the larger group of his friends in his particular settlement or colony. If we cannot by all our demonstrations in all our contacts with that colony and its leader succeed in "selling America" so as to have their

combined good-will in the learning of our ways, then perhaps we should take a look at our ways!

Of the seven months' experiences, these appear to me the outstanding impressions. Beneath them, and tying them together into the whole great organization of modern life and work, are some deeper factors which should be looked at before we talk about the way out.

. . . Meanwhile neither our classes nor our contacts will be found to "demonstrate" an Americanism which the foreign-born worker is likely to find attractive unless we can first of all come to a deeper realization of that fundamental humanness which makes him enormously more like us in all the larger reaches of his thoughts and feelings than unlike us.

CHAPTER XII

SOME DEEPER FACTORS

In order to make it easier to think about the industrial worker, it has long been the fashion of the philosophers to describe him as the "economic man"—interested in playing his part in the process of production or distribution, more or less exclusively for the purpose of thereby earning his daily bread, and, with good luck favoring, his daily jam and cake. "All he wants is in the pay envelope," so more practical and experienced observers are apt to voice the same effort to find an all-inclusive rule of modern human action. Such a man, it goes without saying, will have only an incidental interest in the nature, the hours, or other conditions of his work, or the character of his foreman, or his company, so long as he takes out of the plant enough money wherewith to buy in the remaining hours of his day the satisfaction of his real desires as a person among other persons.

This explanation of the mainspring of men's doings is highly popular. To my great surprise I found it used quite as much by the worker for the explanation of his employer's behavior and especially his misbehavior, as by the employer for the understanding of the worker's comings and shortcomings. But something must surely be wrong with a mainspring whose effectiveness is so readily accepted in the case of the "other fellow" and so strenuously denied in our own. At the very least an enormous amount of proof ought to be required in order to substantiate on any universal basis a theory which no one can be found willing to admit for himself—or for any one else except the person he does not intimately know.

Of course the dilemma may be partly avoided by making the all but universal assumption that putting men into the group called Labor or Management or Capital changes them even down to the bottom of their souls where their life's motors are set upon the piers of their foundation desires. This is the way often taken to get around the need of coming to the understanding of the other person's actions by taking the time to understand *him*. Of such study the result is pretty sure to be the same as that which impressed itself after my months at the south pole of the industrial world—that humans vary little at the bottom of their hearts though they may vary much in the tops of their heads; that of all of us the mainsprings are just about the same, though different circumstances require different modes and methods of their escapement.

For some months I carried about the conviction of the enormous importance of the job to the wage-worker, as though it made him a very different and rather peculiar kind of chap—till I awoke to the realization that in this industrial era of ours the job is almost equally important to everybody else. After all, there are exceedingly few of us in this country whose first concern is not our job. For almost all of us the most important part of our income, by far, comes from the carrying of some current responsibility, with serious trouble camping down very close to us the moment something goes wrong with that source. Even the industrial captain builds up his capital quite largely to take care of himself and his family in the days when sickness or other disability puts an end to his yearly salary as the busy director of this enterprise or that. The chief dollars-and-cents difference between his job and that of the workers in his factory is that he is more likely to be hired—and paid—by the month or the year instead of by the hour, day, or week—and to have certain securities against unwarranted discharge. Upon him as upon the worker hangs

always heavily the fear of lessened income as the result of sickness or death—of joblessness. His abilities and his savings lessen the fear, of course, but do not by any means eliminate it.

Most of the difference, then, consists, not in his being in the group of management, but in the size of his margin of security and safety—a margin given him by his closer connection with those who give the job—or take it away—and by the larger savings and assurances which his larger education and earnings permit. In the work of the Cleveland Welfare Federation we spent large sums trying to get the people of the city to understand that the community's poor were not a fixed group or class habitually acting from abnormal and peculiar motives and therefore habitually and permanently in need of help. It is this difference, not of human material but of educational economic margin, which permits some to save themselves while others, encountering the same obstacle of sickness or unemployment, are brought down to the need of temporary help, just as a friend of mine reported: "I'm getting old. Ten years ago I could stumble and still keep going for fifteen feet at least. Now a stumble means a fall—without doubt and without delay."

The difference is in the margins of assurance, opportunity and living in general, allowed by the daily or weekly wage instead of the monthly or yearly salary—it is this that gives the reason of the labor gang's intenser and more necessitous attitude toward the job, rather than any or all supposition that the gang is made up of humans possessing different interests and therefore wanting satisfactions entirely different from the rest of us.

During the long hours of shovelling bricks, lifting the steel sheets off the cold rolls, or stencilling the "Regular weights, there now!" onto the barrel-heads, it was often a problem to know what to do with one's mind. On some such turns

I would definitely try to make the time go faster by picking out some particular field of recollection and endeavoring, hour after hour, to "lick the chops of memory" by recalling every impression possible, for instance, on one shift from my travels in Italy, on another turn Egypt or South America. At other times I would find myself swinging my body in rhythm with the movements of the job while almost chanting to myself: "I wonder if anybody could ever find any connection between this town's evident immoralities and some of the plant's evident dissatisfactions?" "Is there any connection between the way people earn their livings and the way they live their lives?—and if so, do bad morals cause bad jobs or bad jobs cause bad morals, or both?" As becomes a father, my fondest hope is that the following offspring of my long-turn ponderings may prove a more helpful interpreter of our modern industrial life and all its human units than that offspring of the philosophers which ought to be known as the "economic alibi."

Suppose we start at what might be called our "jumping-on" place there in the shining land of Get-up-in-the-morning, and draw a line through the sixteen waking hours of our day to the "jumping-off" place there in the shadowy land of Go-to-bed-at-night. Such line we may quite properly call our "western front"—at least it represents all the opportunity we have for the putting forward of all our life's campaigns, whatever and wherever they may be. Now, from all that I have seen or heard all kinds of human beings do and say, it is safe to assert that every normal person possesses at the bottom of his heart the desire to find somewhere along this front the satisfaction that comes with the consciousness of "breaking through." It is impossible to conceive of any one who would pass along this front day after day, and year after year, without getting anywhere some feeling that he is making progress—counting as some-

thing more than a cipher in the sum total of humanity—and be therewith content. Such a person is pretty certain to be proved an imbecile or a fool—or else he will be found among the unknown derelicts at the morgue.

Now, in these recent days of unrest and commotion, when fear gives birth to misunderstanding, and misunderstanding increases the brood of fear, it is easy for all of us to believe that the man who is too far off—up the line, or down—for us to see and know him, will not be satisfied unless his "break-through" brings him into the manager's or the autocrat's or the plutocrat's chair of absolute power for the domination of the rest of us. Yet acquaintance with both groups is sure to convince all as it does me that the member of the labor gang is no more truly represented as the father of such an extreme desire than is the capitalist—though such acquaintance does show that each is willing to believe the other not only capable of such a desire, but happy in it. It is immensely truer to the actuality to believe that every normal person, quite apart from his particular membership in this group or that in the industrial process, is moved to do what he does by the universal itch to feel that somewhere on his life's front he is justifying his existence among other persons by "getting on," doing a little better than merely holding on, while those about him pass along. In this feeling all of us find quite as much pleasure in beating our own previous record as in going ahead of others. The main thing is the sense of motion and progress. When the "high spots" of the "boss roller" or the "first helper" are put alongside of the successful banker's or manufacturer's it is odd to observe that they all fit into practically the same formula—each is a high spot because it serves to measure their progress *from the point where they started.* It is this satisfaction in the distance travelled rather than in the point arrived at, that permits millions of us to have our separate, individual satisfactions without wanting to crowd

each other out of the pleasure of the same, or competing, ultimate destination. Thus:

"Well, yes, things have gone pretty well with me," says the nationally known philanthropist, the boss roller, or the first helper, as he reaches expansively for his Havana, his pipe, or his quid, according to station and fancy. "I'll never forget the day—and, yes, the hour, for I happened to notice as I went in that it was —— o'clock—when the boss sent for me from out of the labor gang" (or the office force, or other position without especial distinction), "and asked me if I didn't want to take a try at ——" (fill in name of next position up the line). "Then I recall that it was just —— years ago this next month that my new boss proposed," etc., etc. (fill in all the steps which indicate distance travelled *from the point of starting*).

Altogether, it is very fortunate that the great majority of us take much more satisfaction in passing the "flivvers" of our past, or the truck loads of our slow-moving associates, than we take dissatisfaction in the thought of the limousines still ahead of us and still unpassed on the road of life and progress. All things considered, we could hardly hope for progress from anything less selfish or for self-preservation from anything less progressive.

Now I am convinced that the daily wage-worker wants, to an even greater extent than the rest of us, to find his high spots and locate his break-through in the sector of his job. For one thing, the narrowness of the margin between the daily job and the daily bread means that what he does in the hours under the plant roof determine more narrowly what he may do elsewhere, than does the nature of our work for the rest of us; and that is saying a great deal, for in a world built on jobs, all of us must adapt ourselves first to the conditions which we must meet for the earning of our living, and then, with what we have left of time and attitudes and interests, set about the living of our lives. If

the worker is still on the long-hour day, all this can be figured out in minutes to make plain the immense necessity of getting the utmost of personal satisfactions out of his working time.

That means that the worker lives and moves and has his being there on the job. There is where the tire of his life's wheel meets the smooth or jagged roadway of actuality. But still more important than that, he finds there in the precise nature of his job, skilled or unskilled, important or unimportant, and in the relationships it provides, the most important means of establishing his status and standing as a man and a citizen—and the status and standing of his wife and children. Thus the oil-can or the wrench spells progress upward from the shovel, quite beyond the two-cents-hourly income. Thus, too, the promotion out of the gang to the humblest foremanship is certain to mean not only more money for a wider margin of enjoyments and securities, but also, and much more important, the envious congratulations of the gang, the familiar acceptance as a comrade at the hands of others heretofore far above him, and, finally, those gossipy noddings of heads at the club or the lodge which are the incense burned before the altars of progress and success. It is only the great distance of most of us from such events that permits us to miss the hugeness of these steps as they appear from the view-point of the labor gang. It is this hugeness that causes many workers to lose their heads—certainly, at least, the natural size of their heads—the moment they find themselves thus elevated—and so perhaps inclined to drive their former "buddies" with less consideration than that shown by those who never were in the gang.

Now in view of all this, the most fundamental criticism I know how to make, in regard to the present industrial situation, is this: that in the minds of so many members of the labor gang, and also of higher groups of workers,

there is so wide-spread and so deep-set a conviction that *for them there is no chance to break through on their industrial sector!*

It must be evident to those who have read this diary that while the matter is two-sided, nevertheless, considerably more justification than could be wished is, as a matter of fact, given that conviction. The trouble—the most manifest trouble at least—is in that "first line of defense" which is maintained there at the contact points on the line by industrial management in the person of the boss or foreman, the plant guard or policeman, and the plant paymaster and his clerks. If the break-through is to be engineered on the sector of the job, it must inevitably be in the presence, and with the permission and recognition, of one or more of these representatives of—and of parts of—the management. Through these the workers must get those daily demonstrations of the plans and purposes of all the other "lines." There would seem to be no way by which management can avoid the responsibility for whatever impression the workers gain of its performance and intentions as the result of those demonstrations—nor any effective denial that that impression as a whole is considerably less satisfactory than could be desired.

Whether justified or not, this conviction that on this sector no satisfying feeling of gain or progress is to be made in proportion to effort required—that "pull" and the marrying of the boss's daughter must be counted on for getting forward—produces the same result in the factory as it would on the fields of France and Flanders. When Foch or Haig became convinced—rightly or wrongly—that successful pressure could not be hoped for, strategy—and the necessity to keep moving—required, of course, the transfer of the effort to another sector. So to-day, when the worker becomes, in any way, convinced as the result of a few deadly demonstrations, that employers as a group are unwilling or

unable to reward initiative, loyalty, and skill, he changes his tactics. Leaving behind just enough energy and skill to keep "the enemy" from "breaking through" and discharging him—and he's a wonderful judge of the precise amount needed for this purpose—he withdraws the reserves of his interests and enthusiasms for more effective and worth-while application elsewhere.

Like all the rest of us, the worker, it is worth repeating, carries into the other sectors of his living the equipment he is able to take out of his job. So here again he suffers from the narrowness of his margins. If he is untrained he must daily put a larger proportion of his entire physical equipment—in his case, his entire capital—into his daily givings for the benefit of the needed daily gettings of the family's food than do the most of us. Unskilled, skilled, or semi-skilled, if he makes iron or steel the chances are that he must put in an average of twelve of those sixteen waking hours—with, in most cases, an additional hour and a half or two to go and come.

The result is not favorable to such a worker's finding in, say, the sector of his home the sought-for satisfactions of forward movement and distinction. That is certainly evident from the most casual reading of the foregoing pages.

Over into the sector of his relationships as a citizen, similarly, many a worker can take only a depleted physique and an unsatisfied hope. Some, however, do "stand the gaff" of even the hardest work and, perhaps with the help of a sense of humor or a determined will, endeavor here to find the distinction of leading those around them. I am quite sure that these are often the men whose manifest ability to influence others comes to the attention of the all too common plant detective or "under-cover man"—with the result that they may be reported as potentially dangerous workers. In too many instances such a report is likely to lead to the "planting" of, say, a bottle of whiskey in

the man's clothes, with the later discovery of it by the secret planter, who in horror at such outrageous breaking of the plant rules, lands the offender on the street, jobless and sore, ready to believe that his manhood requires his personal direction of a continuous war against the industrial and economic arrangements which permit such injustice. I have reason to believe that such men are not happy in their capacity as leaders of the war—that they would be enormously happier if they could find there in the plant and on the job the opportunity to enjoy the sense of constructive leadership—which, of course, remains unattainable until the hurt that honor feels has been assuaged. It is strange that so many managers who themselves get great pleasure from their membership in some committee of the local Chamber of Commerce find it so difficult to understand the wish of some of the workers to enjoy similar distinction in their world under the plant roof.

Into the final sector of their miscellaneous relations as a person come great numbers of workers who realize their position at the base of modern industry, yet who have found nowhere else in home or club or lodge any milestone of distance travelled from the starting point of personal insignificance. Here is their final chance. Of such men their profanity, I am persuaded, is intended to convince their hearers that they themselves remain unconvinced of the inferiority which their present job may indicate—in much the same way that a child assures you of his "I don't care! I don't care!" when his toys are taken from him. In addition, he can hope for a certain distinction among his pals by giving the requisite attention to the luridness and daring of his blasphemies. Of such men, too, their boastings of their "fifteen, sixteen w'iskee-beer" are also calculated to impress themselves and their friends with the remarkable carrying or staying powers of their physical manliness. For many, further, the certainty with which

drunken ears are able to hear the assurance of their owner's achievements, past, present, or future, makes it worth while to indulge in the cup which congratulates as well as inebriates—congratulates because it inebriates. The old machinist who used the bartender's dispensations to "get the feelin' of my old position back like, you know," and the melter in the Western steel town for whom the "hard stuff" almost instantly recalled the days when he was discharged because "the boss he knowed I knowed more 'n a minute about steel than he did in a month," as well as the hobo who used his whiskey as protection against the bugs and flies—all these and others support, sorely, this proposition that the worker's bottommost desire is to find the chief basis of his belief in himself there in his work, and that, failing this, he endeavors in all the other parts of his living to make the necessary adjustments.

Yes, I am convinced that there *is* a connection between the town's jobs and the town's morals—or immorals. Through the hours of the morning on the new job or in the evening after supper at the boarding-house, we would feel each other out and do our best to impress each other with our "high spots" just as do two bond salesmen at the club or two society leaders over their tea-cups. This job and that, and its importance, this promotion and the other, especially this occasion or that when the worker showed that he understood his job better than did his foreman—these are men's "talking points" as they try to "sell" themselves to each other; these are the things they hold onto all their lives. The sad thing is that with so many workers the stock of these high moments runs out so quickly—with the resultant drawing on the reserves of this or that drinking bout or this or that conquest of the other sex. In the wealth of detail in the features of that conquest it is all too easy to see that here at least the narrator feels that he has proved that if fortune had only gone differently he

might have shown himself an outstanding salesman, or if fate had only handed him a dress suit instead of a pipe-wrench, the world might have been the better for a real statesman! Instead of believing that vice is the overwhelming of the spirit's forces by the body's, we would come much nearer to the heart of the matter if we discerned in vice the energies of both body and soul combined in an assault upon all the forces that oppose men's having life and having it more abundantly. The harm of it is that the assault secures the hoped-for sense of victory—the indispensable sense of victory—only because it is made at the weakest spot in the line—and so proves fleeting, false, and degrading.

So that first line of defense does more than lessen men's interest to break through on the job. It increases by the same amount the pressure to find on some weaker sector the gain that will justify a proper self-respect. When all the fields have one after the other been entered and explored, there must somewhere be found experiences and satisfactions which will make the whole enough like the normal and average life of the normal average human to be properly called "wholesome"—else a man may not call himself a person. It is the fault of all of us to a greater or less extent if this craving for wholesomeness requires many men to vibrate back and forth across the line of the normal —as from a restrictive job to a short but furious high spot of a vacation in order to feel that these extremes average into a fairly passable holding of the line.

This "wholesomeistic person" is interested in the pay envelope, but most of all he wants it to help him find in his work the justification for feeling himself a man because of what he does—a man because a *work*man, a workman that need not be ashamed. Much wrong we do him when we assume that nothing will satisfy him except the management and ownership of the entire enterprise. That assump-

tion binds our hands because it blinds our eyes to the high desirability of changing his whole life as well as his attitudes and convictions by changing the possibilities for his normal satisfactions on his job. That change requires not only the improving of the foreman and the others he sees as the company, but also the lessening of the fear of joblessness, the ill humor of fatigue and the ignorance of the deeper motives of his associates in the whole industrial proceeding.

The harm that all these do is done because they so vitally affect men's feelings. Built, all of them, upon the bottom wish to consider ourselves self-contained, self-controlled, and worthy personal units in the world, it is our feelings that lead us all to the release of all our energies. Our thinkings give us our facts and the logical connections between them. Our feelings enable us to set a value on those facts and connections. All the yeast in the world gives bread no value until the feelings of hungry humans speak and the arms of hungry humans reach. Short experience will convince any one that it is impossible to overstate the influence on these infinitely delicate scales within us of a few days or weeks of joblessness, a few months of fatigue, or a few years of the conviction that the company doesn't care and that doing the job "don't get you nowheres."

So long as human beliefs and attitudes are so slightly the result of thinkings and so largely the result of feelings of hope and fear, fatigue, disappointment, pride, so long will it be worth while to see the cause of any man's abnormal beliefs and attitudes in whatever abnormal conditions may surround his job. And here it must be noted that the normal conditions of a decade ago may become abnormal to-day, because they have remained while others changed —as when, for instance, other industries shorten their day and leave one or two to continue with the long turns.

"You take the best-trained and mildest-mannered lion imaginable—the result of a life-time's careful handling—

and in five minutes of bad treatment which rubs him all the wrong way, you can drive him back into a wild beast—and, perhaps, keep him there for life!"

In these words an expert trainer puts well another extremely important difference between feelings and thinkings. Ask a man how long he has possessed such and such an idea and you can make a rough judgment as to the probable difficulty of disproving it. But, by its intensity, the emotion of an instant may prove more effective than others which have been possessed for years. Thus a few months or even years of plentiful jobs do not by any means cross off those feelings of despair which burn themselves in on the soul during a few months or weeks of unemployment—as in 1913–14, and to a less extent in 1919. Thus, also, many employers and many union members find it quite impossible to-day to discuss each other without a heat which badly warps the straightness of their thinking, perhaps as the result of attitudes forged in the heat of intense emotions years and years ago.

"Well, you see, he was the leader of the union durin' the strike. A fair-minded man he was—and a decent strike it was, at the start. But finally the company orders every family out of all its houses—in eighteen hours everybody's gotta be out, y'understand. Well, his wife, two days later, had a baby—when they was campin' out—an' died. He's been what ye might call a company-fighter ever since." This was the report of a famous radical given me there in the second mine town.

"No, I've never believed in the fairness of the worker or the unions since the time they went out on us after we had treated them the best we knew how for years," was the way an employer told of his own hurt. "And they all acknowledged that they had no complaint!"

"Well, what can we do?" said the workers in very much the same situation in another city. "If we don't go out

the boys where they haven't got the advantages we've got can't win. If we lose our jobs we can still keep our friends and live in the town here, but if we refuse to help our buddies make their fight, then we can't go on living here—that is, 'thout bein' called yellow. What's the answer?"

Each is trying to solve his problem in the way that allows him to feel himself true to what he decides is his highest loyalties. Yet each fails to see the conditions under which the other's choice must be made. And each is certain that the other's action is made plain by that "economic" formula of the philosophers.

All of which means that in the world of human energies the "relativity of motion" holds as true as any Einstein may demonstrate for the world of natural forces. If all of us stood still, then all of us could stand contentedly and "save our face" in standing. It is when war makes the unskilled worker into a munitions producer and puts him up the line out of his place that those who have not moved forward feel that they have in actuality been moved back, and are therefore unhappy. By the same token the profiteer is felt to have moved backward all those who would otherwise be perfectly content to feel that they had shared with others the universal set-backs of war times and conditions. In the same way, too, men feel it proper to desire more progress in the way of better jobs after returning from the fields where so much blood was shed that all men might travel farther into life and more abundant life.

As long as all these feelings for forward movement normally express themselves first of all in the form of pressure there on the earn-a-living sector, it behooves us to guard and protect them from every influence that disturbs them, unless those influences are found to be absolutely inseparable from the industrial process.

Such disturbance as is to-day caused by the fear of joblessness, fatigue, and ignorance constitutes, I am certain, a

very serious, costly, and needless brake upon both the self-respect and the effectiveness of our workers and fellow-citizens in our basic industries—added to by the further commotion caused by the war's upsetting of old standings and statuses. Before this latter can be ended it will be necessary for all to feel that something like the old relative positions and opportunities for the same relative motions forward have been re-established, with the bottommost moved up so as to meet the more particular measurements and requirements of a more democratic world. The process is trying. The very disturbance and commotion puts people throughout the country into the same touchy mood that followed my sleepless bed and crowded kitchen in the first mine town, because all these things reach—and roil—feelings even though they may not affect thinkings. Thereby the gap is widened. If, then, the precise formula needed to bridge the gap comes not instantly to the lips, feelings are sure to be hurt, relations become strained or broken—if, indeed, the war is not on the instant declared.

But as long as men will fight oftener to save their face than to feed their stomach progress is assured—as long, at least, as the public and the determiners of the conditions of industry understand the vastness of the forces which men carry in their souls and the delicacy of their control, and then arrange properly for the release of those forces.

A word or two about such arrangements and we shall be done.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WAY OUT—AND MANAGEMENT

If my opinions thus far are in general sound, it is evident that those who determine the conditions under which a man earns his living determine thereby pretty much the conditions under which he lives his life. This would seem to be supported by the fact that the whole circle of present-day political and social as well as economic varieties of unrest unconsciously seek correction by attacks not on the social or political but on the industrial sector. By the strategy of the most practical and pressing necessity thus, as well as by the logic of our line of thought, the challenge of the whole range of our modern life comes to be deposited on the doorstep not so much of the owners of industry as of its managers.

I am sure that most of the thinking and feeling which is going on at the top of the great industrial organizations is good enough to deserve better expression on that first line of contact. Nothing is more certain than that this better expression will be worth all the effort or money it may cost to secure it. The average foreman's failure—at least in the fields I visited—to obtain the worker's desire to co-operate would be a matter for smiling if it were not so serious a drain upon the whole industrial process. The number is surely large of those workers who must smile in their sleeves when they think how easy it is to let a foreman suppose that they are giving all they have when as a matter of fact they have merely calculated to a nicety the amount required to save them from immediate joblessness. Such an artistic appearance of labor without its actuality is sure to be the

result, whether the worker dislikes the boss or distrusts the company. In either case the company is sure to pay the bills—though, of course, they are passed on to the consumer in the cost of production. Nothing is surer than that the company's and the public's bill for this failure of the foreman is colossal.

The foreman who fails to get the good-will and respect of his workers is pretty likely, also, to fail to make good use of the slender energies they do release. But it will always be difficult to get either persuasive or intelligent foremen for the handling of men on the long turns: tired workers require too much heat in their driver's mouth to favor much light in his mind. When the shorter hours are put in force, management will make a most costly error if it does not exchange this driver for a leader with the ability to use for the best good of the company the energies he can interest his men to release. Besides huge inefficiency, murder itself is likely to occur if the old type of foreman tries to continue his old tactics with men no longer too weary to hope for the satisfactions of self-respecting work and accomplishment.

The need of lessening the foreman's right to discharge a man at will without, perhaps, withdrawing it completely, hardly needs statement. Larger security on the job is the first requirement for safeguarding the worker's self-respect. The better expression of company interests by plant policeman and paymaster's office also needs no argument.

But it must not be assumed by any means that the cause of the faulty expression lies wholly in these officials and their shortcomings. Just as the worker learns—or thinks he learns—about the company by this or that demonstration staged by the foreman, the guard, or the paymaster's clerk, so the foreman must guess the kind of manner and message he must pass on down the line only by the demonstration of it he sees in the actions of the men just above

him. Without doubt the worker's wholesale and hard-working explanation—"Aw, he's afraid he'll lose his job!"—is all too often the true diagnosis of the foreman's conduct. He cannot be expected to "put himself in the worker's place" unless he can be sure that he doesn't lose his own place by so doing! And quite possibly the fault is not so much in the factory manager or superintendent above him as in the general manager above *him*—or the vice-president or president or chairman of the board above *him!* The labor gang, I am persuaded, is far from being the only place where men sigh to be given a greater chance to "turn themselves loose" without being rapped by a superior on the knuckles of their initiative. That better expression on the first line of contact, therefore, cannot be expected to favor larger satisfactions in the job until more "chiefs" assign responsibilities to all their associates as did one I have much in mind:

"And finally this: Don't bother to tell me how you propose to get the results we have agreed upon. That's your job, not mine. But, in case your delivery of these results is interfered with by obstacles which you cannot move but I can, then have in mind that I try to earn my salary by sitting here with the door open—waiting for you."

If such words serve to send an executive out of the door with his head high and his heart resolved to give its utmost, there is small reason why their spirit cannot be extended clear down the line. At any rate, only when that is done will industry know something of the efficiency of the willing bird which flies farther than the thrown stone. Meanwhile, this plan and that for solving the labor problem is discussed for weeks and months—while the foreman continues to judge that he had better make his own job a little surer by passing in, as his own, the valuable suggestion of one of his gang, and then the "super" judges that he had better make a little surer of his place by passing it on to

his superior as *his!* And no one can question the wisdom of their judgment until he knows how deeply—or how superficially—the president and the board of directors have thought about this matter of getting men to do their best.

It will be recalled that the finest shower-baths I met were in the refinery for the use of the men under the control of the only person I have ever had the least desire to murder! To the same effect is the general understanding that a company known recently to have inaugurated profit-sharing continues to employ foremen who make the workers pay them for their jobs!

These words are not meant to discourage the initiation of plans and devices for the bettering of conditions and relations. The point is, that these must not be expected to lessen by one jot the necessity for fairness and squareness in all the relationships of the entire establishment—nor, similarly, the necessity for improvements which save sweat and strain directly on the job where the work is done—as in the case of the heavy sheet-bar there by the pair heater's furnace. Instead of hoping to build a relationship of friendliness by means of the service or employment department's restaurants, clubs, badges, etc., the purpose must rather be to help the entire organization to carry up and down, without obstruction, all the impulses which may be contributed by any at the top or at the bottom which are calculated to increase the effectiveness of any for the benefit of the whole. In these days of the multiple-unit enterprise, management is failing to offer to all kinds of workers, at top and bottom and in between, the assurances of a break-through that will be proportional to effort because it is failing to give proper thought to the development of those spiritual forces of its persons which are, after all, its final resources; and to the effective projection of these into every nook and cranny of the organization.

That can hardly be accomplished, though it will be helped, by a few classes for foremen. That can also not be accomplished by foremen or workers or executives who are supposed to be kept at their best by the fear of dismissal, instead of by the hope of increased opportunity and security.

A discouraging feature to-day is the number of executives who depend entirely for their knowledge as to whether the projection of their interests and ideals actually reaches to the labor gang, upon the highly prejudiced testimony of the foreman or the highly unreliable report of the "inside man," who makes his living by deception and who stands to lose his job the moment he fails to disclose a certain amount of trouble and unrest around him.

The result is that the worker's ignorance as to the real heart and purposes of his employer is equalled only by the employer's ignorance of the real wants of his workers. If it were not so, more employers would have confidence to ask the workers themselves to tell them what is on their minds—and then see that nothing happened to them for telling. One reason why this is not done more generally in industry is that the manager is inclined to miss this point of the importance of feelings and so to rely upon his thinkings. Especially if he was once a worker, he is likely to think that his reasoning powers, by which he believes he has built up his business, will tell him what the worker wants even better than the worker himself can do it. The result is fairly certain to bring later disappointment to him and soreness to the men. He should hang on his walls the "Eleventh Commandment," "Thou Shalt Not Take Thy Neighbor for Granted."

Another reason for delaying so long the asking of the worker for his opinion in matters, not perhaps of finance or sales, but of the job and its conditions, is fear—fear that the worker will take advantage of the occasion merely to

put more into that pay envelope. But except under conditions which appear to him to justify a sense of injustice or distrust, the most his self-respect will permit him to ask for is whatever represents at one and the same time the best interests of the company and of himself. Where, therefore, this spirit of reasonableness is not in evidence, management will do well to seek, and seek diligently and deeply, for the abnormal conditions or relationships which are sure to be at the bottom of such abnormal and unreasonable feelings.

In this collective dealing—whatever may be its particular form—the worker, if he is young, wants a larger opportunity to show what he can do—with the assurance that it will get him some kind of proportionate recognition. If he is old, he wants a larger security for the holding of his job and his place in the line of job importances and standings. In both connections he has something to give in return for these gains. He knows the exact amount of energy he puts into the job and how much he might put into it—also how much more he *could* make what he puts in count, if somebody would make it worth his while. In one company now finding that it can pay better wages and still make steel more cheaply on the short day than on the old long turns, the men have helped largely to this end by contributing of their store of this knowledge of the job. As a result this job or position on the furnaces or rolls has been eliminated and that one has been combined with another for the saving of a man. Another thing the worker can give is his understanding of some of the difficulties of management—and his resultant increased respect for management's inability to work out all matters to everybody's instant satisfaction. Of such understanding in these days of restless labor, freight tie-ups, and tight money, management needs all it can get from any one but most from the worker.

It might be claimed that the worker, as a matter of fact, ought to want more than this for which he feels willing and able to give return. But with a larger chance to enjoy the satisfactions of a steadier, better job, with less stealing of these satisfactions by the foreman, he will be found to grow in ability and capacity to the same proportionate degree that the rest of us grow under the same stimulus—namely, the necessity of "making good" by successfully meeting, one after another, the responsibilities of our jobs. To anticipate without fear the gradual development of a partnership based upon the development of abilities and capacities requires nothing but mutual confidence in the fairness of each side. Such fairness any one is certain to find easy of expectation who has taken the trouble to add to his belief in the fundamental wish of the average manager to play fair the further belief of the worker to base his own self-respect upon the same honest foundation. Each group must have a certain amount of consideration in understanding that the other is sure to be having its own troubles in moulding the actions of all its members into that consistency of performance which is required to establish the kind of character that begets confidence. The shortcomings of this kind that exist in the past of both groups complicates enormously, it goes without saying, the possession of either this expectation or consideration unless they can be cancelled off against each other.

All of which means that there can be no easy way out of the industrial problem. The reason is that that problem is a problem of relations between persons all of whom are daily forming and reforming their attitudes and hopes and beliefs and wants and faiths and fears on the basis of what they see or think they see, what they think, and especially what—and then doing their best or their worst accordingly—they feel. For which reason it is difficult

enough to work out satisfactorily the relations between two perfectly friendly and perfectly expectant and considerate individuals. Naturally enough it is sure to be enormously more difficult to work them out between great groups all of whom are bound, more or less, by their group loyalties, their economic necessities, and their economic and physiological margins—to say nothing of the further difficulties of comparatively sudden gatherings together, strange confusions of tongues, and feelings that require that interpretation which often serves only as a "compound fracture of speech followed by mortification." In such circumstances, it behooves each group to look with such forgiving eyes upon the inconsistencies of the other's behavior as it would wish to have the other look upon its own. Both must face the demand for better collective morals before they can expect success as either corporations or as unions.

These necessities and restrictions mean, for one thing, that there cannot possibly be enough promotions to go around, even when management equips itself to recognize ability wherever it discloses itself. But not all workers want promotion. An immensely greater number do want to have a better idea of what the job is for. Huge numbers work year after year making parts of machinery without ever seeing the completed whole of which they have the right to feel themselves the co-producers and co-creators. Greater knowledge of its service to others makes my job better because more important. And the possession of a better job to-day than yesterday entitles me to think of myself as a better man. Luckily industry is awakening to the importance of this, as in a factory where movies are used to explain why a motor works to the workers who day after day make the motor's parts. Along such lines there are almost endless opportunities for increasing the worker's understandings and abilities without requiring the larger

imagination called for in the more theoretical classes unrelated to the job.

Better jobs and steadier jobs, less tiring jobs, jobs whose human service is better understood, jobs with a better chance to enjoy the satisfactions of their doing without these being lessened by a grasping foreman representing an unknown employer: this is what the worker wants more than he wants to sit in the chair of the manager or clip the coupons of the owner.

The challenge should not be too much for the American executive. Certainly he will find a greater satisfaction and perform a greater service in the meeting of it than ever he has known before. A few decades ago the mass needs of the world called for the mass production of the great corporation. The need was met by the executive who was trained in the assembling and marshalling of the dollar in armies large enough to supply the power of massed finance. After him came the leader who possessed the ability to develop and direct men's desires and demands in a way to furnish the organized mass sales required for the mass production made possible by the massed dollars. He in turn has been followed by the expert scientifically trained to secure the refinements in mass production which massed demand—and competition—made possible and necessary. This executive still has some distance to go before we can talk legitimately about that science of industry which stands for the organized knowledge of the natural forces it employs. To-day the interests of the owners of the dollars which created the plant, and the originators and possessors of the desires and needs which keep the plant going, have the right to ask that the present-day executive give deeper thought toward developing that art of industry which will stand for the organized emotion of its human factors and forces—organized and applied in ways which will at

one and the same time meet most effectively the needs of both the makers and the users of goods, both the performers and the receivers of services.

But if the manager is to meet this challenge of bringing about a better America by means of better jobs, he has the right to ask the co-operation of his customers in ways which, finally, are worth mentioning.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WAY OUT AND THE PUBLIC

RECENT events throughout Christendom are calculated to make plain the interest of the public in this problem of the relations between those investors of brawn, brains, and bullion who comprise industry. To this interest the public is not hesitating to give voice in the form of its demand that ways be found whereby these relations can be composed with less general inconvenience and annoyance. This demand is not likely to be satisfactorily fulfilled until the makers of it see that it involves certain serious responsibilities.

One of the most outstanding of these appears to me to be the organization of machinery for getting the worker and the job together. Both industry and the public have to pay too high a price in the shape of the wasted opportunity of the unmanned job and of the injured morale of the jobless man to allow the getting of the two together to remain in the hands of the employer who likes to have forty men at his gate for every five jobs, the union which may similarly wish to juggle the market, or the job agent who puts money in his pocket every time one of his patrons is hired—and, by the same token, fired. Nor can this function be performed well by a government department which, in the nature of the case, is compelled to favor the worker more than the work itself or the employer. This is practically the situation of the Department of Labor according to the terms of its establishment.

There should be no reason why that department and the Department of Commerce could not jointly be authorized

to set in motion an interstate employment bureau which would facilitate the transfer of men from one part of the country to the other without the over-emphasis of one group's interests or the over-centralization of authority which hobbled the recent federal bureau.

Beyond doubt such a joint bureau should ask and receive the support of manufacturers, workers, and public in making at once a study of all the obstacles in the way of the maximum regularity of operation of all industries. In such regularity the wish of the owner meets the wish of the manager and the worker: all want steady work, whether for their dollars, machinery, and plant, their directing abilities, or the energies of their hand and arm and head. Without doubt, too, such a study would not get far without seeing that the public has a chance to play a large hand in aiding this desired regularity, or in insisting that men shall not work themselves out of their jobs. It is well known that extremes of style tend to overwork men and women part of the year, and then to out-of-work them a larger part. Seasonal buying of such things as coal naturally puts upon both production and distribution the same strains of rush-hour peak loads—with the consequent depressions—that daily embarrass the transportation systems of cities. This strain seems to grow rather than diminish as the users of, for instance, railroad or manufacturing supplies tend to come together into larger and larger aggregations of buying power. Such aggregations present, however, the means for securing the hoped-for improvement with greater ease, when once the solution of the problem is seriously approached. Such aggregations and government could also co-operate to make the hobo no longer necessary by fitting seasonal jobs together in ways to avoid the need of migration.

Whether unemployment insurance as operated in other countries is to be considered or not, there is no question but that such a study of the obstacles is desirable in itself

from every point of view before the public can think intelligently of getting at both of these corner-stones of the whole industrial problem—the getting together of the man and the job, and the keeping of them together as long as is efficiently possible. If government cannot represent the public interest in this way, it is to be hoped that some group of enlightened employers may set about it in an unprejudiced and scientific manner, with, if possible, the cooperation of their workers.

The most important result of such studies and the organization that would follow them for increasing the regularity and the security of the job would be this: it would force the foreman and the whole managerial organization to abandon the all too general practice of capitalizing the fear of joblessness, and to organize for getting a much greater co-operation from the workingmen by means of a constant appeal to their faith in the surety of reward. Until some such fundamental change as this is made there can be but futile talk about the moral or progressive values of good character in connection with the relations between industry's persons either as individuals or as groups. Without this change, furthermore, industry will remain far behind education, religion, and salesmanship, all of which have in our day substituted for their old appeal to fear of punishment or penalty the appeal to hope, and faith in a proportionate reward.

It is a question whether any plan such as that of the second industrial conference will serve to inform public opinion as well as one organized to give to all the facts of industry a continuous and unprejudiced study and interpretation without waiting until the situation is acute and those in the middle have come to share the prejudices and biases of one side or the other. But many plans will doubtless be found worth trying and will be certain to contribute some bit of guidance to the better step. The main thing is

for the public to realize that all its protestations of the paramountcy of its interest in the matter will not avail to secure serious influence for its opinions unless these opinions are free from the bias of feelings and are based upon real understanding—an understanding as far removed as possible, for instance, from the almost total ignorance with which the public continues to treat the strikes of the steel workers, the soft-coal miners, and, perhaps to a less extent, the railway men. In short, the public's right to an effective view-point in this matter will require it to *think* less about the relations between capital and labor and to *know* immensely more about capital and about labor.

Such an informed understanding would start at once to break down the present tendency to roll together the interests of about 400,000 manufacturers and of about 30,000,000 workers into the charming but highly deceptive simplicity of "capital and labor." Those thousands of manufacturers are making tens of thousands of different kinds of things, meeting tens of thousands of different kinds of problems as put up to them by millions of different buyers of their goods and services. Still vaster is the extent of the problems of the wishings and wantings and standards and beliefs and prejudices and necessities and luxuries of all those thirty millions! Most of our misunderstandings come from taking too much for granted—missing the perspectives which make the nearer view so simple. Looked at from a distance, the differences between the foreman and the member of his gang, between the millwright or the rigger and the laborer, seem slight. "Out of work!" we are apt to say. "How can that be when I can't get men to mow my lawn?" The truth is that the public cannot do a better and more valuable thing for itself and the country than to exercise all its power to make sure that the millwright may never find it necessary to ask for the chance to mow that lawn! For him to do so would deal a cruel

blow against that self-respect upon which the public must depend to keep him at his bench every working-day, an upright, forward-looking, and sincere worker and citizen. For days after he takes the job of a common laborer he will not be able to hold his head among the friends with whom, after years of work and ambition, he now has the standing that goes to the possessor of skill with tools. As a matter of fact, there is a wider breach between the skilled and the unskilled laborer than between "labor" and "capital."

It is the thread of self-respect and standings and statuses running through all these differences that ties the world of modern society together. It is impossible to overstate either the delicacy of this thread or its crucial importance to the whole great organization of present-day working and living and enjoying.

We give to the dollar altogether too great an importance when we consider it the cause either of men's industry or their intrigue, their virtues or their vices. The dollar is merely an especially convenient and simple means for facilitating the measurement of a man's distance from the cipher of insignificance among his fellows. If it does not serve that end it is not sought beyond the narrow limits required for the daily bread—as in the mine town, where "conspicuous leisure" proves more valuable to this end and so causes loafing in exactly the same way that the standing which the dollar can buy for the mine owner or operator in the big city, with its fine houses and limousines, brings him down diligently on time every day to his desk. Beyond a certain point, dependent upon the standings and statuses which the dollar can buy in the community, the increase of wages is thus quite as likely to lessen as to increase effort.

Those who are sure that the dollar causes the harms of modern life will be disappointed to see those harms continue if ever private profit is done away with. Without

bothering first to get the money as now, men will still go on trying to make their particular jobs and the importance, skill, and usefulness of them in comparison with other jobs represent the particular degree by which they as citizens are moving forward from their earlier and less trained and less important selves, or at least holding their own in comparison with others. As long as human needs must be met by the doing of jobs, these jobs will be the real criterion of character and worth, of applied serviceableness—the real means of indicating a man's importance to others and of understanding their importance to him. And as long as they are such, men will do deeds as base to get the chance to indicate their standing through them as they do now in order to obtain the additional and easily calculated manifestation of importance made possible by money. German military and civil life was not appreciably better than ours when the guests sat down at table according to the degree of nearness to the Kaiser denoted by the job given by their government.

So it seems to me that there is no need to try a new system of society. I find myself less a socialist than ever; the whole thing seems too vast and yet too delicate to put into the hands of a committee. What we need to do—and at once—is to apply more insight to the working of the system already in existence this long while. Any system will tie itself together only with the strength and certainty of the cord with which it can tie men's givings to their gettings, their wantings to their havings, their presents to their futures. In any system the investor of money, of managerial mind, or of effective muscle will get out of the whole process of industry what he wants for his givings only with the silent understanding and co-operation of all of us. As workers used to call my attention to this or that "demonstration" they were noticing as to what "gets a fellow somewhures" and what does not, I found myself wondering

whether amongst any of us there could be any such thing as character or virtue except as we could believe that the fulfilment of certain conditions of performance would without fail bring at some later date the enjoyment of the reward—and whether we could hold our faith indefinitely in the face of demonstrations to the contrary. I doubt it. The main difference is that education puts some in better position to see over a larger field or around more corners than others—and therefore more able to find the demonstrations that support their faith. But it is the great public of all of us that determines what is the strength of the cord that ties the "to-be" to the "is" and makes the right reward follow upon right performance. If we in our capacity as railway employers allow it to come about that the tenders of switches and maintainers of track gain less recognition in the pay envelope or otherwise than men who work with the pick and the shovel elsewhere, then we must not complain if men desert the switches.

If we in our capacity as bestowers of good-will and recognitions kowtow to the possessor of millions more than to the discoverer of new forces in the molecule, then we must not complain if men go in for the millions rather than the molecules. If always "the wheel that squeaks the loudest gets the most grease," then we must expect maximum squeaking. If we permit it to come about that the will to do brings no better recognition and no closer connection with the well-to-do than does the lack of it, then well-doing will begin to be a stranger to well-being. And when these are no strangers then the wish for the satisfactions of self-respect will begin to exert its pressure elsewhere than on the job. If, furthermore, that line which is known to tie right moral results to the right moral actions of individuals is observed not to operate for the performance of groups, then corporations and unions will alike seek to avoid the responsibilities of moral character. And while the church

may continue to urge upon us all as individuals the requirements of the moral law, we shall find it constantly easier and easier to evade them as more and more our actions become fused in the activities of the multiple-unit groups which are sure increasingly to operate as the great forces and factors of our modern life.

Which means that a country is pretty sure to get as good government as it deserves and as good an industry—no better and no worse—because men will see no point in their exerting more political or industrial effort than they have noticed from experience is worth while.

When men are helped to find in their jobs the satisfactions that make many of us wish there were more hours in the day for the doing of our work, then—and only then—will men stop exerting pressure to lessen the time spent in their earn-a-living sector and to increase the money and the hours which they can take out of it with which to bring up the average of their lives as a whole.

Disappointment is sure to continue, also, if this public of all of us with one hand educates ourselves to new and larger abilities and, with the other, fails to provide the better jobs without which these abilities will only serve to bring us disappointment and unhappiness. Such failure is likely to have serious consequences when the children of the present foreign-born workers come to the plant in larger numbers—after the manner of the young crane-man of the billet dock. Common labor with its untrained hands—and usually the untrained direction of these hands—is pretty surely the most expensive part of the productive process to-day. In addition it furnishes the most unreliable and unstable part of our industrial structure because its very lack of training makes it fairly ready to get off of one job and onto the next, so long as its requirements are equally simple. Especially at this time of labor shortage all of us should ask, for our own security, that

industry invent more labor-saving machinery, especially in its hottest and roughest jobs, before it lets this shortage prevent it from discontinuing the long turns or before it feels itself built upon a secure foundation in men's feeling toward the possessors of skill.

The schools, the churches, the libraries—all the organizations for the bettering of American life—will not suffice to serve or save the life of a country unless that country's industry furnishes—from its top to its bottom—jobs which permit all of us to put into practicable and serviceable form the inspirations and ideals of our best living. That does not mean at all that jobs must be made easy or clean and comfortable or even interesting—the worker does not want to loaf, and he can see fine points in a dull or monotonous job with an eye that should shame us. It does mean that he wants to feel sure that, when he does give all he has to give, he and his value in it all will not fail to get something like the satisfactions in his heart and the recognitions for himself and his family to which he feels that service entitles him. Like all the rest of us, he follows the line not so much of the least resistance as that of the maximum recognitions per unit of effort.

If we take millions of people, with all the interests of their heads and the desires of their hearts, and assume to dispose of them under the five letters of "labor," then the lines begin dangerously to stretch which bind the future and the present together in the way which alone makes possible whatsoever things are true and of good repute. Such a strain upon the lines the war has brought—as men saw others getting unfair shares of money and other recognitions, while the high cost of living was met better by those who fought for larger wages than by those who, like the teachers, trusted us to see to their reward. One result of that strain is that men are seen to be working less hard and generally acting less reasonably—which in turn gives the employer

a grievance. The strain upon those lines—and they have only the tenuous strength of faith—becomes highly dangerous when, at so critical a time, men begin to argue for doing away with further attempt at understanding each other and having instead resort to machine guns. That only plays into the hand of the Bolshevist agitators who see their work of disruption thus begun for them in support of their doctrine that there can never be any reconciliation between the seller and the buyer of human energies. Hundreds of thousands of honest workers have in the last year lost—for a time at least—their faith in us of America, because in our ignorance of them we have found it attractive to try to save ourselves by blaming the general unrest wholly upon them.

The sweat and tears—and, yes, the blood—of the long days and longer nights among the "boys" of the open-hearth floor, the black "rooms" "inside" or the greasy pits of the "house" or the "yard" will not have been in vain if they may somehow serve to lessen the number of those who—with the best of intentions—are withholding that understanding and recognition which is indispensable to the whole scheme of organized life and progress—a recognition that must be built on some such "close-up" knowledge of men's hearts as these pages have tried to give, and on the sympathy without which knowledge seems somehow to fail to carry on.

Ten thousand men, so it is said, must join their forces together for the putting of the daily loaf upon our daily table. But every single one of those forces is released not so much by the force of the others as by virtue of each one's faith in the others—faith that his co-operation will be rewarded by theirs. This will always be so as long as humans are human with hearts as well as heads. Before we lay the blame upon those others or talk about trying some other plan, all of us, whether we happen to think of our-

selves as in the group of persons called Capital or Management or Labor or the Public, should arrange to put into this present scheme a larger measure of the two elements which are likely to prove sovereign for these trying times—a cool head and a warm heart.